CONTEMPORARY MILITARY STRATEGY AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

US AND UK ARMED FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ 2001-2012

ALASTAIR FINLAN

BLOOMSBURY

Contemporary Military Strategy and the Global War on Terror

Contemporary Military Strategy and the Global War on Terror

US and UK Armed Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq 2001–2012

ALASTAIR FINLAN

BLOOMSBURY
NEW YORK • LONDON • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

Bloomsbury Academic
An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Inc

1385 Broadway
New York
NY 10018
USA

50 Bedford Square
London
WC1B 3DP
UK

www.bloomsbury.com

Bloomsbury is a registered trade mark of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published 2014

© Alastair Finlan, 2014

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

No responsibility for loss caused to any individual or organization acting on or refraining from action as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by Bloomsbury or the author.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Finlan, Alastair.
Contemporary military strategy and the Global War on Terror :
US & UK Armed Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq 2001–2012 / by Alastair Finlan.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-62892-795-5 (hardback : alk. paper) – ISBN 978-1-62892-145-8 (pbk. : alk. paper)
1. Afghan War, 2001– 2. Iraq War, 2003–2011. 3. Afghan War, 2001–Participation, British. 4. Iraq War, 2003–2011–Participation, British. 5. War on Terrorism, 2001–2009. 6. Combined operations (Military science) 7. Strategic culture–United States. 8. Strategic culture–Great Britain. 9. United States–Military relations–Great Britain. 10. Great Britain–Military relations–United States. 11. Strategy. I. Title. II. Title: US & UK Armed Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq 2001–2012.
DS371.412.F527 2013
956.7044'340973–dc23
2014000524

eISBN: 978-1-6289-2814-3

Typeset by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India

For my grandfather, Harry Edwards,
a soldier of the British Army in India and for Berit

CONTENTS

Preface viii
Acknowledgments xi
Abbreviations xii

1 Contemporary military strategy 1
2 The Afghan conundrum 25
3 Operation Enduring Freedom 51
4 US/UK "strategy" in Afghanistan: The first five years (2001–2006) 75
5 The Iraq puzzle 101
6 Operation Iraqi Freedom 125
7 US/UK strategy in Iraq: The first five years (2003–2008) 149
8 Contemporary military strategy and the Global War on Terror 181

Selected bibliography 201
Index 209

PREFACE

This book explores the evolution of contemporary military strategy by the United States and the United Kingdom in relation to the Global War on Terror (GWOT). It does so from the perspective of strategic studies that has a focus on the use of force in international relations. For most people, this is an esoteric area of study because it is not a mainstream subject and there are just a few centers for this field located in a handful of major universities around the world. Strategic studies is a sub-field of the discipline of international relations and gained purchase as an area of academic interest in the aftermath of World War II. Its popularity was intimately linked to the invention of nuclear weapons and the outbreak of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. Strategists focus on the operational problems of today and tomorrow with an eye on the past in order to develop prescriptions for the future. Civilian strategists dominated the development of nuclear strategy in the West and also developed ideas about limited warfare during the counter-insurgency campaigns in Malaya and Vietnam and explored the potential of new technologies on land, at sea, in the air, and in space. With the end of the Cold War, strategic studies became deeply unfashionable with many scholars moving into the seemingly more pertinent areas of international security and security studies to embrace the challenges of the new strategic environment in which military force appeared less relevant. Consequently, by the time of 9/11, strategists in academic departments around the world were quite thin on the ground, yet for those of us still working in the field, the last decade or so has been intellectually fascinating and yet horrifying in terms of the gross misuse and misunderstanding of strategy.

This book offers a critical examination of the application of military strategy in the GWOT. It is based on a close reading of events, from 9/11 to present-day operations in Afghanistan from a civilian strategist's perspective who has made a study of both campaigns as well as the military cultures of the United States and United Kingdom.[1] The conclusions here will offer uncomfortable reading for some. First, it makes the case that after 9/11, American and British military establishments were given a task by their political masters for which they were unsuited. Second, it suggests that there has not been any coherent strategy (grand or operational) for much of the GWOT. Indeed, it argues that key civilian and military decision makers in the United States and United Kingdom have struggled greatly

to construct strategy due to muddled overall political aims and ineffective military means on the ground. No one element can be blamed solely for this state of affairs because political and military elites working together, wittingly or unwittingly, enabled this situation to occur. As such, the consequences have been simply catastrophic for the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, but equally for the American and British service personnel who volunteered to serve in these challenging operational environments. Third, it asserts that with the end of the GWOT in 2014 and the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan (they all left Iraq between 2009 and 2011), the harsh audit of these wars will become painfully apparent in terms of the sheer cost in blood and treasure. Of the latter, it will take decades to pay for the campaigns. The noteworthy question from the GWOT will be what did the United States and United Kingdom gain from all this expensive military activity and, in just a few years from now, a new generation of historians and social scientists will inevitably try to tackle this puzzle and ascribe meaning to it. In the final analysis, it is remarkable that two of the most advanced and sophisticated armed forces in human evolution have singularly failed to construct effective military strategy in both theaters of operations. As in the Vietnam War, a generation or so earlier, they have won the battles and most of the tactical fights, but failed to get a grip on the actual wars. The outcomes in both Iraq today and Afghanistan tomorrow are, and will be, messy and embarrassing for all those involved in the top-level decisions in both political and military elite circles that led to the use of military force in both countries. History will be unkind to the architects, civilian and military, of these indecisive wars of choice that may well inadvertently increase global threats to the United States and United Kingdom rather than diminish them in the future.

Scope of the book

The balance of material in this book reflects the character of the unequal partnership of the coalition effort in the GWOT and deliberately focuses more on the United States or the dominant actor in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom rather than its junior partner, the United Kingdom. Chapter one explores the theoretical foundations of contemporary military strategy and the various strands of thought that have influenced modern conceptions, from the advent of nuclear weapons to the impact of digital technologies. Chapter two focuses on the shocking events of 9/11 and how key policy makers in the United States set the tone of the response in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. It considers the significance of the decision to choose a military response, the state of civil military relations in the United States, especially in relation to Central Command, and the challenges posed by the Afghan conundrum.

Chapter three looks at the formative stages of Operation Enduring Freedom and critically challenges the concept of the Afghan model by considering it from a process-based analysis. It highlights the various "crises" in strategy and command that bedeviled US military planning by shedding light on the fractious relationships between the Pentagon and the State Department as well as between key elements within President Bush's administration. Chapter four explores the first five years of US/UK strategy in Afghanistan. It puts forward an alternative explanation of the Afghan model as a fortuitous *deus ex machina* occurrence and highlights the absence of an overarching grand strategy that would stymie much of the subsequent military efforts. It also draws attention to the deleterious effects of the Iraq distraction and the problems that beset the large-scale British intervention in Helmand province in 2006. Chapter five explores the Iraq puzzle and how the original decision to invade the country can be traced back to various causal pathways within US political elite circles. It looks at the highly unusual planning cycle within Central Command and the extraordinary amount of high-level civilian interference in the military preparations. Chapter six considers the formative stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the extent to which the Rumsfeld/Franks concept of operations stood up to the challenges posed by the initial invasion. It highlights numerous aspects of campaign and the extent to which pre-war planning was out of sync with the reality on the ground. It also explores the vital British contribution to Operation Iraqi Freedom in southern Iraq. Chapter seven looks at the first five years of US/UK strategy in Iraq and highlights the challenges posed by the outbreak of the insurgency in the occupied country. It draws upon a psychological perspective to explain the various stages of the US response to the collapsing situation in Iraq that eventually led to the "surge" in 2007. It also considers the problems that British commanders in Basra faced when trying to accommodate the directions from political elites in London with the deteriorating situation on the ground with considerably less success than their American colleagues. Chapter eight concludes the book by considering contemporary military strategy and the GWOT in the light of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. It encompasses the recent surge in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq in 2011 before exploring some of the key lessons and failings of current thinking about strategy formulation in the United States and United Kingdom. Finally, it is important to note that the analysis, conclusions, views and any errors in this research are entirely my own.

Note

1 See Alastair Finlan, *Contemporary Military Culture and Strategic Studies: US and UK Armed Forces in the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2013).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very grateful to the Research Councils United Kingdom (RCUK) and Aberystwyth University for funding the RCUK Academic Fellowship from 2005 to 2010 that formed the basis of this research. I am also extremely indebted to Professor Ken Booth, former head of the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University, for pointing me in the direction of the fellowship and helping me submit a successful grant proposal. I am very appreciative of the support of my colleagues in the Department, especially Martin Alexander, Ian Clark, Toni Erskine, Mike Foley, Claudia Hillebrand, Gerry Hughes, Peter Jackson, Milja Kurki, Andrew Linklater, Colin McInnes, Andrew Priest, Simona Rentea, Jan Ruzicka, Len Scott, Roger Scully, Alistair and Judith Shepherd, Kris Stoddart, Kamila Stullerova, Hidemi Suganami, Jim Vaughan, Nicholas Wheeler, Howard Williams, and Sarah Whitehead. I am also very grateful to Admiral Lord Boyce, General Sir Peter Wall, Lieutenant General Jonathan Riley, and Rear Admiral David Snelson for taking time out of their exceptional busy schedules to share their thoughts and experiences with me about their roles in the Global War on Terror. Thanks as always to my parents, Margaret and James, my brother Julian, Moshira Rateb, Nest and Eirwyn Jones, and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara. I am also very appreciative of the efforts of my editor Matthew Kopel and his extremely efficient editorial assistant, Kaitlin Fontana. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the two anonymous reviewers who provided very useful comments and suggestions for the manuscript.

ABBREVIATIONS

AEW	airborne early warning
AQ	Al Qaeda
ASOG	Air Support Operations Group
CAOC	Combined Air Operations Center
CENTCOM	Central Command
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Commander
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COIN	counter-insurgency
COMBRITFOR	Commander, British Forces
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CTC	CounterTerrorism Center
DFID	Department for International Development
DoD	Department of Defense
EBO	effects-based operations
ET	emerging technologies
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FOB	forward operating base
FOFA	follow-on forces attack
GPS	global positioning system
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HNS	Host Nation Support
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
IT	information technology
JAM	Jaysh al-Mahdi
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JSS	Joint Security Station
LOC	lines of communication
LPD	landing platform dock
MNF	Multinational Force
MOD	Ministry of Defense
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGS	Naval Gunfire Support
NSC	National Security Council
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom

OODA	Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance
OSS	Office for Strategic Services
PARA	Parachute Regiment
PC	personal computer
PEOC	Presidential Emergency Operations Center
PNAC	Project for a New American Century
PSC	Private Security Company
PsyOps	psychological operations
RM	Royal Marines
RMA	revolution in military affairs
SAR	search and rescue
SAS	Special Air Service
SBS	Special Boat Service
SF	Special Forces
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SPECOPS	Special Operations
TLAM	Tomahawk Land Attack Missile
TPFDL	Time-phased forces deployment list
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

CHAPTER ONE

Contemporary military strategy

War is a social environment characterized by a state of armed conflict or sustained military action between nation-states/groups of people.

Warfare is a prominent feature of international relations in the twenty-first century. People continue to be killed in intense fighting, armies crushed in battle, and states overthrown. In this respect, notwithstanding the remarkable technological and social progress of humanity in the last 3,000 years, some long-standing characteristics of human development such as organized warfare stubbornly persist. From Ancient Egypt to contemporary America, societies still need effective military strategy in order to meet the challenge of the ever-present danger from war. The first decade of the new millennium has accented this trend and since the declaration of a Global War on Terror (GWOT) by President George Bush in the aftermath of the horrific terrorist attacks in 2001, the United States and the United Kingdom have been engaged in continuous warfare to the present day. This study located within the field of strategic studies has been underpinned by two key research questions that are: to what extent has the US/UK imagination or thinking about warfare been out of sync with the new realities of transnational terrorism/twenty-first century warfare and why has these powerful state actors in world affairs failed to decisively defeat Al Qaeda and the insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq? This research was conducted between 2005 and 2010 and so recent events such as the US withdrawal from Iraq and the killing of Osama bin Laden are covered to a degree, but the main focus of the book looks more closely at the formative stages of the GWOT and how Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom were fought, the lessons that can be learned for strategy and the wider consequences. The last decade of war has raised awkward questions and cast long shadows of doubt about the abilities

of American and British civil and military elites to plan and win wars effectively that begs a number of pressing questions that are explored in some detail in subsequent chapters. For all the spin surrounding Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq, the blunt audit of war will reveal campaigns that cost thousands of lives and trillions of dollars for little return of investment. The "freedom" campaigns stand out as being unusual in the sense that they were not wars of national survival in the same manner as World War II, but represented wars of choice that political administrations in Washington and London deemed necessary. The litmus test for a war of choice is very simple: if lost or abandoned will it matter greatly to the society engaged in it? The recent withdrawal of American and British troops from Iraq from 2009 to 2011 and their proposed departure from Afghanistan from 2014 onwards suggests that neither campaign possessed any tangible long-term benefit or core value to the states that fought them. This outcome in itself raises the broader questions of what is military strategy and how has its conception in the West developed over time.

The [Greek] idea of strategy

What is strategy? Strategy is a popular expression that is sadly everywhere and yet nowhere in the highly developed capitalist states of the West. It has become a conceptual gravity well within the popular lexicon that spans a wide variety of social action, from business to government and beyond. This is a point made by Hew Strachan, Chichele Professor of the History of War at Oxford University who laments that "the word 'strategy' has acquired a universality which has robbed it of meaning, and left it only with banalities."[1] Worryingly, the lack of precision about its meaning and use by policy makers has become a source of great confusion, not least of which, the mistaken belief that strategy and policy are the same thing.[2] Erudite clarity on this matter is offered by Elinor Sloan in an excellent recent book on modern military strategy who indicates that "the word 'strategy' is derived from the Greek *strategos*, normally translated as 'general'."[3] In other words, it is intimately related in a definitional sense to a high-ranking officer with responsibility for commanding military forces in battle. As such, "the term itself remains fundamentally military in character"[4] and this definitional foundation stone should really be the ideational jumping-off point for understanding. Process-tracing the idea of strategy from the Ancient Greeks to the modern age provides considerable conceptual clarity and helps to dispel the definitional fog surrounding this idea. Thousands of years ago warfare in time of the Ancient Greeks was sophisticated, complex, and demanded efficient coordination of effort. The centerpiece of the fighting was an infantry-based formation called a phalanx, protected

by spears and later a long pike or sarissa ("13 or 14 feet long").[5] Individual warriors or hoplites, depending on the city-state, would wear heavy armor, helmets, a round shield and a sword. Other elements to be taken into account in Ancient Greek warfare, often against various Persian rulers, whose fighting technologies were occasionally adopted,[6] included cavalry and stone throwers. Greek armies could range in size up to around 40,000–50,000 troops in many of the more notable battles such as Plataea in 479 BC that involved roughly 38,000 Greeks.[7] These elements necessitated the development of superior levels of leadership and central direction on the field of battle. Sparta, perhaps the supreme military culture and society in human evolution to date, produced some of the best military leaders and as Plutarch records, "it was not ships or money or hoplites that these other Greeks would ask Sparta to send them, but just a single Spartiate commander."[8] It is almost impossible not to note that one of the finest military commanders in history, Alexander the Great, was also a product of Ancient Greek warfare and, in his short life, this Macedonian military genius conquered much of the known world from Greece, the Middle East, to vast parts of Asia as far as India.

According to the Greek interpretation of strategy, a general was the senior military officer with specialist knowledge of the art of war who determined the movements and engagements of armed forces in combat on a battlefield. There was, and remains however, a caveat with this interpretation that bears great relevance today because it actually encompassed two historically separated understandings that conditioned warfare in very different ways.[9] The earlier understanding can best be described as a fission approach to strategy for it encompassed a distinct separation of politics and military affairs or the direction of military forces for the purpose of winning a battle. From this perspective, warfare and strategy was *the exclusive realm of the general* [military leadership] and hoplites fought under conditions of limited war with battles confined in time and space with strict rules of conduct.[10] This was a very narrow conception and the scope of a general's remit was confined to the field of battle so that the phalanxes could engage in restrained warfare with observed rules concerning prisoners of war and the outcome of the victory that could be decided within a matter of hours[11] of hostilities commencing. This pattern of waging war possessed numerous social, political and military implications that carry resonance over the ages, even to modern times, with regard to understandings about strategy. First, the decisive battle determined the outcome of the war and it became the central ideational and material mechanism through which victory or defeat was attained. Second, once political leaders had declared war, the battlefield became a military-dominated zone for the duration of the fighting.

The later understanding of strategy can be understood as a dynamic fusion [strategy] of political aims and military means under conditions of

unlimited warfare best associated with Philip II of Macedon and, more so with his son, Alexander the Great. As Victor Davis Hanson puts it, "the Macedonians saw no reason to stop fighting at the collapse of their enemy on the battlefield when he could be demolished in toto, and his house and land looted, destroyed or annexed."[12] Under Philip and Alexander, political and military leadership became fused and so too their aims and employment of military forces. Strategy became *the direction of military forces for winning battle to directly facilitate political domination and conquest*. As such, the concept and remit of strategy was broadened to become a synthesis of the political/military spheres with few limitations on the use of force against enemies. Married together with tactical innovations such as the redefinition of the phalanx with the introduction of pikes and a remarkably modern "maneuverist" system of using cavalry, light infantry and phalanx in concert (what is described today as "combined arms") provoked slaughter and conquest on a widespread scale. Some historians suggest that Alexander the Great in only eight years killed "well over 200,000 men through decisive battle alone."[13] Given the predominant killing technologies of the time, swords, and pikes, this is a horrific yet extraordinary achievement. It demonstrates the greater potential and power of subsequent understandings of strategy as a fusion of politics and military means with few limits as opposed to the previous conceptions that emphasized the demarked separation of these realms and strict rules of conduct concerning the use of force. The key lesson of the Greek interpretation and its dyadic understandings was devastatingly simple and hold true today: strategy involved the direction of military forces with variable effects depending on the form it took. In its fission form – a distinct separation of politics and fighting – with strict conditions attached, the effects were circumscribed and usually confined to the battlefield. In its fusion form, a tight blend of political aims with military means with few restraints, the power of strategy was multiplied exponentially with extraordinary social outcomes that converted battlefield success into state conquest.

Strategy is a complex synthesis of political aims with military means and the orchestration of operational military action in a dynamic conflict environment.

Classical conceptions of strategy

Despite the wisdom of Ancient Greeks and their helpful indication that strategy relates to a general standing on a battlefield directing the efforts of military forces, perhaps the single most important source of confusion about the word stems from its amorphous nature. It is an abstract idea

or a higher concept that possesses no clear identification with a concrete object, unlike the word "sword" for instance that throws up a number of related images. As such, it remains stubbornly out of focus in the mind's eye. Contemporary strategists have tried to provide metaphors or associations with more concrete applications to ease comprehension with varying degrees of success such as describing it as "the bridge that relates military power to political purpose"[14] or as "the conceptual switchyard by which the technologies, ideologies and social blueprints of modernity have been adopted in warfare"[15] to name just two prominent ones. The problem with all these attempts, while laudable, is that they convey an image of a rather passive element. In other words, by connecting the dots or the military means with political objectives, it automatically means strategy is present, but this is not necessarily the case. In essence, the weakness of these metaphors is they do not capture the dynamic and binding nature of strategy when political and military variables are acting in synthesis. It is more akin to the effect of a magnetic field on iron filings and it captures and aligns them in a given direction. The stronger the magnetic field, the tighter the alignment and vice versa. In this light, strategy still plays an important role in linking military means to political ends, but it guides, shapes, and determines the interrelationship between the two variables, not just merely joins them together. From this interpretation, strategy can be best described as a dynamic/determining variable without which political aims and military action are uncoordinated. This idea of strategy as magnet metaphor works well because it highlights the role of strategy as an interactive agency or an energy that binds and directs, but also governs in relation to individual variables such as military forces on the battlefield or even combinations of variables (military forces and political aims). Without central direction of military action, the essential Greek definition of strategy or generalship, military and political efforts lack coordination and will in all probability, unless dealing with a very incompetent enemy, fail. Strategy is a very tangible phenomenon that needs to be recognized as an independent variable in its own right, and it is vital to the effective coordination of social action across a range of different human activities, but in the affairs of war, it is indispensable.

It is remarkable that out of a vast pantheon of strategists in human history who could provide inspiration and knowledge for future generations to draw upon only a small number of strategic theorists hold great currency among premier league military institutions and within the broader field of strategic studies. As such, their views disproportionately influence present-day conceptions of military strategy. The most prominent and influential is without question Carl von Clausewitz, the great Prussian soldier/scholar whose seminal, but unfinished work, *On War* (1832), has guided and continues to inform military thinking in academies and universities around the world. Clausewitz was very much a product of the late eighteenth and

early nineteenth centuries, a revolutionary time in which the strategic world was dazzled by the military genius of Napoleon Bonaparte and his extraordinary victories across Europe. Unlike many modern strategists who are to be found either within the peaceful civilian confines of academia or in uniform as professional soldiers who joined the profession aged 18 and upwards, Clausewitz was a seasoned practitioner of war from the age of 12 onwards[16] and was involved in major battles throughout his career including the Waterloo campaign that finally defeated Napoleon in 1815. Strategy, regardless of point of origin, is intimately connected to its age and the enduring appeal of Clausewitz's ideas stem in part from the firm anchorage in early modern warfare that still has great relevance in the digital twenty-first century. The Napoleonic wars with their mass armies, the infamous *levée en masse*, rapid movement of forces, and industry-supported warfighting technologies including factory produced muskets, rifles, and cannons possessed many parallels with today's modern battlefield. Indeed, military formations were comprised of cavalry (horse-based), infantry, and artillery that worked in an ideal sense in concert during the engagement that mirror and predate modern equivalents. The type of fighting that Clausewitz witnessed would not be unfamiliar to a general or any combat participant in modern times and this is best articulated in a wonderful vignette devoted to showing what it was like being in a combat zone:

> Shot is failing like hail, and the thunder of our own guns adds to the din. Forward to the Brigadier, a soldier of acknowledged bravery, but he is careful to take cover behind a rise, a house or a clump of trees. [. . .] A little further we reach the firing line, where the infantry endures the hammering for hours with incredible steadfastness. The air is filled with hissing bullets that sound like a sharp crack if they pass close to one's head.[17]

This scene, based on personal experience on the battlefield, transcends the 200-year distance between war in the Napoleonic age and today. The last sentence captures well the all too familiar sounds of bullets, from muskets in the nineteenth to assault rifles the twenty-first century, whizzing past their intended targets. Clausewitz was, and remains, a soldier of modernity, albeit of an early form, and as such his ideas and thinking about war and strategy still retain great relevance and insight concerning the use of force in international relations.

The enduring appeal of Clausewitz stems from the sheer clarity and practical insight of his writings on war that offer a very particular and utilitarian idea of strategy and its application. His definition of strategy is very precise: "the use of engagements for the object of the war"[18] that follows on from his interpretation of tactics as "the use of armed forces in the engagement."[19] The dividing line between strategy and tactics has often

been and remains confusing to the layperson, but Clausewitz makes it very clear that the point of contact between soldiers is the realm of tactics and how these tactical battles are coordinated on the battlefield is, in essence, strategy. Clausewitz possessed an instrumental understanding of war, neatly captured by his most well-known aphorism, "war is merely the continuation of policy [politics] by other means."[20] In other words, war is the mechanism through which political aims were achieved, though the Prussian master strategist did add a vital caveat that has often been overlooked, "the political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose."[21] Scholars have described Clausewitz's approach as a "means-end rational strategic paradigm"[22] that captures well the instrumental foundations of his understanding, but is important to acknowledge the human dimension to this thinking. Clausewitz had seen at first hand how military organizations, especially the people who serve in them, under the stresses of war are chaotic and prone to error. His writings emphasized that war is "the collision of two living forces,"[23] "man and his affairs, however, are always something short of perfect,"[24] and the all present or "never absent" element of chance.[25] Taken together, the hard-nosed instrumental logic of his interpretation of strategy combined with a searing insight into human nature under life-threatening stress, Clausewitz provides a convincing understanding of strategy as the direction of large-scale military actions – involving the successful organization and execution of smaller scale tactical fights – in order to achieve the political aim. The logic of the three-level definitional rubric of strategy is extraordinarily strong. Primacy is given to the political objective that sets the direction for the use of military force or the campaign that at lower levels of engagement involve the successful orchestration of tactical "point of contact" encounters with the enemy. The interrelationship and coordination of the political and military dimensions is critical to this construction of strategy. If political elites choose aims for which their militaries are not geared for or are beyond their capacity, then disaster will occur. Equally, if military elites have not ensured that their fighting formations are capable of winning these critical tactical encounters, then success is also jeopardized. At the heart of the Clausewitzean understanding is the idea that violent military action/killing is a permanent characteristic of war. It cannot be avoided and indeed provides the conduit for success. In order to achieve it, "the maximum use of force" must be employed as "war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst."[26] Put simply, for Clausewitz, having looked directly in the face of Napoleonic warfare and its devastation across Europe and his homeland, war was a total environment that demanded total commitment from a state, if it were to be won in as short a time as possible with the fewest casualties.

Two other classical strategists stand out in terms of their influence on contemporary military thinking. The first is Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini,

a Swiss soldier and a contemporary of Clausewitz, who fought on the side of the great genius of war, Napoleon Bonaparte. Jomini's influence stems from his extremely influential textbook, *The Art of War* (1838) that was eventually taken up with great enthusiasm by the US Army, especially at its elite officer-training academy at West Point outside of New York. Jomini, in the same manner as Clausewitz, had seen warfare at first hand and was present at famous battles such as Austerlitz in 1805 and Jena-Auerstadt in 1806 to name just two.[27] His vision of strategy was a little different from Clausewitz, though there are obvious similarities. To Jomini, "strategy is the art of making war upon the map, and comprehends the whole theater of operations."[28] One of the most sophisticated aspects of Jomini's conception of strategy is the extent to which it mirrors contemporary thinking with regard to various levels, albeit using a very different language. As the Swiss strategist explains, "strategy decides where to act; logistics brings the troops to this point; grand tactics decides the manner of execution and the employment of the troops."[29] The introduction of the concept of grand tactics is a point of divergence between Clausewitz and Jomini. Grand tactics in this sense parallels the modern concept of operational strategy and the operational level of war that dominates military thinking in the West. The separation of strategy and grand tactics is also a forerunner to the present-day distinction between grand and operational strategy where the former is a "political-military, means-ends chain"[30] that sets the key objectives for a campaign/war that military assets attempt to achieve. For Clausewitz, this explicit linkage between the political and military dimensions was a foundational given, but Jomini offered a clear articulation of the different levels of strategy that are now taken for granted. With regard to warfighting, Jomini's writing also possesses a very modern flavor, particularly his stress on maneuver warfare and the desirability "to engage fractions of the hostile army with the bulk of one's forces"[31] or in modern parlance to match strength against weakness, rather than strength against strength. The logic of this thinking mirrors that of *Blitzkrieg* and the maneuvrist turn in the operational art since the horrific experience of World War I that demonstrated the futility of static, attrition style, "strength against strength" warfare. Finally, in addition to his strategic prescience, Jomini also realized that the power and destructiveness of modern weapons technology could lead to armies "see[ing] again the famous men-at-arms all covered with armor."[32] Heavy body armor of the same weight of medieval times is now standard kit for modern military forces in the West due to the effects of contemporary firepower.

Sun Tzu is the other strategist of note whose writings are over 2,000 years old, but his ideas about strategy continue to echo within military circles, though with considerably less influence than Clausewitz or Jomini, but nevertheless still part of the strategic discourse and landscape. In contrast to the military theorists whose ideas were based on their experiences in the

Napoleonic wars, Sun Tzu took a very different approach to strategy and did not place emphasis on battle as the mechanism for victory. For Sun Tzu, "to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill. Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy."[33] To a significant degree, the ideas of Sun Tzu about focusing on indirect means of gaining victory have found resonance in the work of Basil Liddell Hart, a British strategist whose experience in World War I sharply influenced his views about seeking alternative approaches to war making,[34] but also in more modern conceptions. Effects-based operations (EBO), wittingly or unwittingly, attempts to influence an enemy's strategy by generating disproportionate effects, usually with some form of kinetic weaponry such as an air-dropped bomb or missile that will influence their political decision makers.[35] Another important component of Sun Tzu's thinking was his idea that "all warfare is based on deception"[36] and that generals should constantly deceive their opponents in order to gain a military advantage. Modern military operations take for granted deceptions, feints, and the active use of propaganda or what is usually called psychological operations (PsyOps) to dislocate opponents and negatively influence the morale of their forces. A point of divergence between Clausewitz, Jomini, and Sun Tzu concerns the "employment of secret agents"[37] in order to gain intelligence on the enemy. Sun Tzu laid great stress of this element and, again, to a significant extent, his ideas dovetail with contemporary military organizations that employ various military, usually Special Forces, and nonmilitary assets such as intelligence agents to gain insight into enemy dispositions and intentions. Sun Tzu concludes his writings with the advice that "secret operations are essential in war; upon them the army relies to make its every move"[38] and it is striking in the current GWOT and beyond, the increasing reliance on secret [special] operations by the West as a precursor, and, in some cases, the primary means of conducting operations.[39]

Interstate conventional warfare and the legacy of World War II

It is a truism to assert that strategy is intimately connected to its age, its dominant technologies, but most importantly, the imprint of searing experiences in war. A popular adage is that armies always fight the last war, but this assumes all wars bear equal significance and the last one merely replaces or "erases" the previous one in the memory banks of the armed forces. The reality, however, is that all wars are not equal and some wars are more important than others. Indeed, some carry far more social weight or retain considerable space within the corporate memory

of fighting organizations long after the battlefields have fallen silent. The selection of which war carries the greatest symbolism and significance depends on numerous variables, from its category whether it be major or minor war to its outcome, defeat or victory. Furthermore within these various typologies of measurement, there exists an even greater scale of magnitude of war that ranges from limited to total. The experience of some wars such as the limited Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s was something that the US Army was very happy to forget that stands in stark contrast to its memory of the total war environment of World War II that remains strong within the institution. For much of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first, the resonance of World War II can still be felt in the military establishments in the United States and the United Kingdom. World War II remains the greatest military conflagration in human evolution that consumed millions of lives and ushered in the age of atomic weapons. Murray and Millet describe it as "the deadliest conflict in modern history"[40] and some estimates indicate that maybe 50 million people died in the war[41] and a single atomic bomb dropped on the city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 killed around 75,000 instantaneously with a final death toll of perhaps 200,000 over a five-year period due largely to the effects of radiation exposure.[42] Roger Chickering and Stig Förster put forward a convincing case about the total nature of the war:

> By a significant margin, this was the most immense and costly war ever fought. If coastal waters are counted, its theaters of combat extended to every continent save Antarctica. It involved most of the sovereign states on the planet, the bulk of the world's population, and the largest armed forces ever assembled. Well over seventy million human beings were mobilized for military service. This was the quintessential "deep war."[43]

World War II was conventional warfare fought on a gigantic scale. On the Eastern Front, for example, by summer of 1943, the Red Army was 6.5 million strong,[44] "despite the loss of over 3 million men as prisoners alone."[45] At the battle of El Alamein in Egypt in 1942, the victorious British 8th Army sustained losses of "thirteen thousand five hundred men (killed, wounded and missing) and six hundred tanks."[46] For the invasion of France on June 6, 1944, the combined American, British, and Canadian forces managed to land "over 155,000 men onto French soil"[47] in a single day that was a remarkable military feature in itself in the face of stiff opposition from German forces. The shadow of interstate warfare of the scale of World War II has continued to dominate conventional ideas about war and strategy in the West for nearly 70 years. It was and remains (so far) the apogee of conventional fighting for military officers in which industrial amounts of ordnance and formations were fired into battlefields in contests that could last weeks at a time. Having experienced premier league warfare

of this kind that dominated and shaped ideas and materials (tanks, aircraft and ships) so profoundly to the point that there remain visible parallels in the present day, it was difficult for military elites not to conceive of warfare through this particular and appealing set of lenses. This is not to suggest that conceptual oxygen has been completely drawn out of the military space for new ideas and thinking, but supplies are limited and this will influence the long-term sustenance of them. Some ideas that mirror the experience of the total war environment of World War II will have more resonance with military establishments in the West than more radical visions of fighting. In this light, it is highly likely that the resurgence of interest in counter-insurgency (COIN) warfare in the present GWOT is likely to a temporary fashion that will rapidly change with the withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan from 2014 onwards.[48]

Nuclear deterrence is the possession and development of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems as a threat to maintain the status quo between nuclear powers.

Nuclear strategy: Deterrence vs warfighting

The development of atomic weapons in World War II sparked a wide-ranging and still smoldering debate among academics, policy makers, and military elites as to what these extraordinarily powerful devices meant for strategy and the future prosecution of war between states. The arguments revolved at the foundational level around whether atomic weapons had changed the nature of war. In other words, were they just another *evolutionary* weapons development in the same manner as the machine gun made bullet technologies even more effective than rifles or did they represent a *revolutionary* new dimension along the same lines as gunpowder, though with obviously more destructive power? The device dropped on Hiroshima, called "Little Boy," was a uranium U-235 gun-type weapon that possessed a destructive yield of between 12.5 and 15 kilotons[49] (thousands of tons of TNT or high explosive). In modern terms, this is a relatively small weapon, but it is the kill rate of atomic/nuclear weapons that sets them apart from conventional weapons. This point is illustrated by Gerald DeGroot who explains, "according to the Standardized Casualty Rate, the Hiroshima bomb was 6,500 times more efficient at killing than an ordinary bomb."[50] For the first generation of strategists who tackled the conundrum posed by atomic weapons, two key intellectual poles of thinking were established that are still apparent in contemporary debates. On one side of the debate resided a generation of strategists from different intellectual fields and countries who argued that the bomb was a revolutionary device that fundamentally changed

conceptions of interstate warfare between atomic powers. This perspective is best captured by one of the most influential scholars of his generation, Bernard Brodie, described by Ken Booth as "the quintessential strategist of the first generation of the nuclear age."[51] Bernard Brodie produced one of the most seminal and thoughtful explorations of the implications of atomic weapons in a book published just a year after the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[52] In this edited collection, Brodie described the bomb as the "absolute weapon" that profoundly changed everything. Unlike previous "revolutions" in offensive weapons that eventually provoked a stabilizing equilibrium through a counteractive action/reaction technological development cycle typified by the relationship between weapons and armor through the ages,[53] the atomic bomb had no effective counter. In identifying that the advent of atomic weapons had created a new age of strategy, Brodie made perhaps his most well-known pronouncement, "thus far the chief purpose of our military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other useful purpose."[54] Through this lens, as there was no effective defense to atomic weapons, especially those delivered by what is now described as an intercontinental missile, atomic war had to be avoided. Just a limited exchange of these weapons targeting the major cities of countries such as the United States or Britain would be catastrophic in the extreme in view of the growing magnitude of these weapons. Brodie, of course, was writing before the development of thermonuclear weapons or H-Bombs that are measured in megatons or millions of tons of high explosive yield that added even greater weight to his argument. This intellectual pole, of accepting the new world of the atomic age and that all-out warfare with these technologies must be rejected, became associated with the strategy of deterrence. Essentially, the possession and development of nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems is used by a nuclear power as a "threat" to maintain the existing status quo. In contrast, other writers saw more utility of these weapons, particularly when the United States possessed a monopoly over their possession that ended in 1949 when the Soviet Union tested their first atomic device. Contributors to the debate such as William Borden, writing at the same time as Brodie, made the case "that atomic weapons were just bigger weapons and should be conceived in traditional ways."[55] This view perceived atomic weapons as merely the next evolutionary step in weapon technologies and did not profoundly alter the variables and calculations involved in the prosecution of war. Crudely put, they represented just a bigger bang for your buck. This pole of intellectual thinking about atomic weapons became known over time as the strategy of warfighting.[56]

Nuclear warfighting is the planned use of nuclear weapons in a conflict environment.

In nearly 70 years of debate, these initial thoughts about the strategic utility of nuclear weapons have given rise to a vast discussion that has generated a proliferation of thoughts and opinions about the conceptual foundations of these different poles of intellectual enquiry. The strategy of deterrence has evolved into several distinctive parts, from the simple and deeply moralist position expounded by Brodie to the complex systems analysis approach articulated by Albert Wohlstetter in his influential article "The Delicate Balance of Terror" published in 1959[57] that offered a perspective arguing deterrence needed to be constantly manufactured and sustained in order for stability to be ensured. From this perspective, the possession of a few nuclear weapons, as "first strike" offensive technologies was not enough. States had to work "hard"[58] to make deterrence effective and needed the ability to "strike second"[59] or "second strike capability" to make deterrence work. Such an intellectual position carried with it huge implications for the strategy of deterrence, not least of which, the requirement for more weapons, the investment in different launch platforms, what is now known as the nuclear triad (bombers, land-based missiles, and submarine-launched missiles) so that an attack on one or two elements of a nation's nuclear force would not prevent a retaliatory strike. Other scholars such as Thomas Schelling[60] contributed to the widening debate about the strategy of deterrence to encompass game theory underpinned by the idea that actors would behave rationally in a conflict.[61] Schelling opened up the strategy of deterrence to mathematical formula and classic games such as "prisoner's dilemma" that has become a staple for instruction in schools and colleges that teach strategic studies over the generations. Another important yet later evolution was the development of the concept of existential deterrence by McGeorge Bundy in 1983[62] that stressed, "as long as each side has thermonuclear weapons that *could* be used against the opponent, even after the strongest possible preemptive attack, existential deterrence is strong and it rests on uncertainty about what could happen."[63] Existential deterrence has far more in common with Brodie's original position and Ken Booth argues that in some respects his early thoughts were "anticipating"[64] this subsequent evolution by Bundy. The strategy of warfighting while overshadowed by the various permutations of deterrence throughout much of the Cold War gained a fresh perspective in the 1980s through the work of Colin Gray and Keith Payne. In various articles and policy papers such as "Victory Is Possible" published in 1980 these authors promoted the idea that "the United States must possess the ability to wage nuclear war rationally."[65] This would require thinking fully and "seriously for the actual conduct of nuclear war should deterrence fail."[66] Alongside of this thinking, a new generation of smaller and more useable nuclear weapons was developed and brought into service such as ground and air-launched cruise missiles that were originally designed to carry nuclear warheads for use in the European theater of operations

if the Cold War turned hot between the forces of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact.

Limited war is warfare with restrictions whether in terms of the types of weapons used, usually just conventional weapons, and often confined to a specific geographical region/country.

Limited war

The quandary posed by the threat of absolute destruction involving a mass exchange of nuclear weapons by the major powers in international relations brought to the fore the issue of fighting and strategy at the conventional level. While the dangers of escalation were a force for restraint between the superpowers, it did not prevent the outbreak of large-scale conventional warfare between non-nuclear powers or proxy wars in various theaters of conflict around the world throughout the Cold War. The Korean War of 1950–1953, for example, witnessed combat of a similar intensity to World War II directly involving the armed forces of the United States, the United Kingdom, and UN nations. The age of limited warfare was characterized by conflicts that occurred below the nuclear threshold (deliberately so) and were often confined to a particular geographical setting with restraints on the size of conventional forces applied to particular theaters. As these were not wars of survival for major powers and clearly fell into the wars of choice category, they could not and were not willing to mobilize the scale of forces that had marked the fighting in World War II. In addition, the dislocation of the great powers by World War II that saw the defeat of British, French, and Dutch forces in Southeast Asia at the hands of the Japanese in the early phases of the war in the Pacific encouraged a strong anti-colonial impetus among indigenous populations around the world, from Africa to the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Asia. It also, according to some commentators, propelled communism to the fore as a natural alternative and social order from 1945 onwards.[67] In view that these nascent indigenous resistance forces could not possibly hope to match strength against the colonial forces of law and order, it led to the development of alternative means and methods of fighting for freedom and change. This style of fighting, while commonplace in the annals of history, caught the armed forces of many nations fresh from the traditional conventional battles of World War II quite unaware by how seemingly innocuous and isolated acts of violence by small numbers of armed groups, often united by a common ideology, could provoke the death spiral of colonial administrations within a matter of years in Palestine, Indochina, Algeria, and eventually Vietnam.

The "new" type of warfare that typified these conflicts was given a variety of labels from insurgency to guerrilla warfare. It is useful to distinguish the subtle distinctions between these often synonymously used terms. Thomas Mockaitis helpfully defines insurgency as "an organized effort to overthrow a nation from within using a combination of subversion, guerrilla warfare and terrorism."[68] In other words, insurgency is a political conflict in which the old order is attacked by other internal elements to produce a new one. In addition, guerrilla warfare refers to a method of warfare. The evolution of this type of conflict naturally provoked a generation of strategists who specialized in unorthodox warfare One of the unifying elements that typified the new breed of strategic thinkers was their hand-on personal experience in the major conflicts of the time. In the West, the eminent counter-insurgent was the British practitioner, Sir Robert Thompson, who applied his skills in Malaya and Vietnam in his capacity as head of the British Advisory Mission.[69] Thompson possessed an unusually clear insight into the various phases that a communist-inspired insurgency needed to attain before it reached a critical mass of effectiveness and offered a practical guide for dealing with it. Above all other elements, Thompson stressed in his book, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, the importance of the political dimension in combating an insurgency and that it was in essence "a war for the people."[70] Another major COIN strategist whose thoughts have gained even greater prominence in modern times was the French Army officer, David Galula, who produced a seminal book called *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*[71] in 1964 that drew on his own successful experience in the Algerian War. Galula's ideas were very much in sync with Thompson's thinking with regard to the importance of politics and the population, but also stressed the linkage between revolutionary war and the insurgent[72] by "paraphrasing Clausewitz" that "insurgency is the pursuit of the policy of a party, inside a country, by every means."[73] One of the strengths of Galula's thinking was his innate ability to see the "other side of the hill" as Basil Liddell Hart would describe or the insurgent's perspective that provided a rare glimpse of the elusive enemy's mindset. This perspective was also provided by Robert Taber, a CBS investigative journalist, who produced an extraordinary exploration of guerrilla warfare, published in 1965, and called *War of the Flea*.[74] Taber witnessed at first hand with Fidel Castro and Che Guevara the Cuban Revolution and spent some time covering the US involvement in Vietnam. To Taber, this type of warfare was revolved completely around the struggle for the consent of the population[75] and a guerrilla was essentially "*political partisan*, an armed civilian whose principal weapon is not his rifle or his machete, but his relationship to the community, the nation, in and for which he fights."[76] Perhaps Taber is best remembered for his elegant yet pithy description of this type of warfare for counter-insurgents that "the guerrilla fights the war of the flea, and his military enemy suffers the dog's disadvantages: too

much to defend; too small, ubiquitous, and agile an enemy to come to grips with."[77] These three classic works on insurgency and guerrilla warfare contained singular insight into the challenges facing armed forces designed for conventional warfare and the strategies they needed to adopt in order to prevail in this complex form of war.

War in the Digital Age and the revolution in military affairs

The introduction of a plethora of new conventional weapons technologies in the 1970s and the steady progression toward the digital revolution that would transform communications and computers in the 1980s and beyond piqued the interest of strategists around the world as to what the implications would be for the use of force in international relations. In the last years of the disastrous war in Vietnam, the United States introduced a number of new weapons that qualitatively improved on previous generations such as television-guided and laser-guided bombs. For the best part of half a century, aircraft had dropped free-fall bombs with all the obvious limitations in terms of accuracy and effect. These new weapons could be electronically guided precisely to their targets and proved to be a revelation when applied against targets that had proved to be stubbornly resistant and costly to attack with inaccurate air-dropped bombs. The Yom Kippur War of 1973 supported thinking about these technologies as Egyptian forces using a combination of state-of-the-art wire-guided anti-tank missiles and a comprehensive missile umbrella managed to neutralize the superiority of Israeli conventional air and ground (tank) formations and take the Suez Canal in one of the most impressive military operations of the modern age. The use of these advanced conventional technologies provoked numerous studies were conducted into the future effects of the new weapons in the United States and, one of which, the Strategic Alternatives Panel,[78] was headed by Albert Wohlstetter that concluded in 1975 "that non-nuclear weapons with near-zero miss may be technically feasible and militarily effective."[79] Increasingly, strategists began to imagine a future battlefield in which precision strikes using laser-guided, unmanned cruise missiles and remotely piloted vehicles could be united "into a single weapons system or a network of systems"[80] that would permit long-range, accurate, and devastatingly effective attacks on enemy formations and strategic assets. These developments did not go unnoticed in the Soviet Union that possessed preponderance in traditional conventional weapons technologies and military officers began to realize that such technologies could reduce their huge material advantages for the first time without recourse to nuclear weapons. Influential Soviet military

officers such as Chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal Nicolai Ogarkov, began referring to these developments as "a military technical revolution."[81] In the United States, a think tank in the Pentagon called the Office of Net Assessment under Andrew Marshall became aware of the Soviet writings on and fears about these new technologies and modified their description into what is known in the West as the "revolution in military affairs" or RMA.[82]

The RMA is a hugely controversial[83] and contested concept. It is not just associated with the modern age and some writers suggest that there have been at least ten such revolutions since the fourteenth century alone.[84] The contemporary term has encompassed a diverse range of contemporary debates within strategy circles. Eliot Cohen, for example, explored the likely effects of the information technology (IT) revolution of the 1980s/1990s when applied to military organizations. Admiral William Owens, as Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the United States in the early 1990s, embraced Wohlstetter's original concept of a network of systems and called it a "system of systems" that would offer considerable scope to finally overcome one of the perils of warfighting or the so-called fog of war.[85] Enhanced electronic intelligence and reconnaissance systems would provide the means to disperse the uncertainty factor in war. In addition, the US Navy was exploring at the time the idea of cooperative engagement capability (CEC) so that a fleet of ships would be a truly integrated and organic entity in which sensors platforms would share information and guide the appropriate weapon, no matter what vessel it was located, toward its target.[86] In the US Air Force, the new weapon technologies formed an important part of new thinking about how to apply air power to exploit them to the full. In part, it drew on the ideas of Colonel John Boyd who became synonymous with the concept of "decision cycle dominance" through a persuasive model known as the Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act (OODA) loop[87] based on his own experience as a combat pilot. Boyd's ideas were taken up by Colonel John Warden III who incorporated the utility of new bombing technologies and new enhanced penetration aircraft such as the F-117 Stealth Fighter to create a model for strategic bombing based around five concentric rings that encompassed leadership (center ring 1), organic essentials (ring 2), infrastructure (ring 3), population (ring 4), and, on the outer ring (5), fielded military forces.[88] The idea was create a form of systemic paralysis (attacking the enemy's "system of systems")[89] in order to dominate its decision cycle. These ideas were taken further and based on the experience of the first Gulf War of 1991 by his deputy, Lieutenant General David Depula who stressed the importance of parallel warfare:[90] attacking targets simultaneously across a range of target sets, rather than the traditional sequential style that emphasized destruction before moving on to the next set that would provide the foundations for EBO.

Together these complementary strands of thought and new technologies promised an exciting and dynamic vision of warfare that offered superior advantage to the armed forces of the United States for the foreseeable future.

Peering through the dust of 9/11

In the aftermath of the most devastating terrorist attack of the modern age with the demolished World Trade Center in New York wreathed in choking dust and one of the defining walls of the Pentagon, the most powerful military headquarters in ruins on a beautiful September morning in 2001, contemporary military strategy was at a turning point. A decade or so earlier, the Cold War had ended unexpectedly, not least of all to the military experts in the field of strategic studies, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and outbreak of a series of ethnically inspired conflicts around the world from Yugoslavia to Rwanda. In the light of these events, some strategists such as Martin Van Creveld argued that "large-scale, conventional war – war as understood by today's principal military powers – may indeed be at its last gasp."[91] Mary Kaldor in her "new wars thesis" described the pattern of contemporary conflict as being "more directed at civilians, involving a blurring of the distinctions between war and crime, and is based on and serves to foment divisive identity politics – these are the characteristics of 'new wars'."[92] General Sir Rupert Smith, one of the most distinguished British practitioners of strategy in modern times, stressed that the changes in conflict were profound enough to be labeled "a new paradigm – which I define as 'war amongst the people'; one in which political and military developments go hand in hand."[93] Notwithstanding these macro-level assessments of the character of war in the twenty-first century, there were various competing and complementary perspectives as to how micro-level applications of force should be applied in the future. Much of this analysis stemmed from an evolutionary strand of thought that can be traced back to the RMA thesis from the mid-1970s onwards. In military circles, the traumatic experience of the Vietnam war provoked not only considerable soul-searching within military institutions in the United States but also the development of new highly innovative conventional strategies geared toward fighting the Soviet Union. In the early 1980s, the US Army rewrote its field manual FM 100–5 and its author, Brigadier General Wass de Czege, developed a new concept called *AirLand Battle*[94] that called for close cooperation between the US Air Force and the US Army in future fighting. In essence, *AirLand Battle* was premise on the idea that "air power would be needed to attack the deep targets and to protect the flanks while ground forces advanced."[95] This

new approach was significant because it recognized, unlike in the past, that no "one service could fight and win by itself."[96] Alongside of *AirLand Battle*, NATO developed another concept called Follow-On Forces Attack (FOFA) in an attempt to offset the massive numerical superiority of the conventional forces of the Warsaw Pact in the event of a confrontation turning hot. As Colin McInnes explains, "FOFA exploited the Soviet preference for echeloning its forces in depth. New technologies (now collectively termed 'emerging technologies,' or ETs) would allow NATO to identify, target, and destroy second-and third-echelon formations *before* they could reach the battlefield, thus relieving pressure on NATO's front line."[97] These innovative strategies were never tested in combat against the forces of the Soviet Union, but the Gulf War of 1991 did incorporate some of their thinking, especially *AirLand Battle*, and its outcome was spectacularly successful. After just "forty-three days"[98] of bombing and a mere "100 hours of ground combat,"[99] the Iraqi forces effectively surrendered. The startling success of the Gulf War of 1991 provided even greater impetus for the articulation of a new concept called EBO. For its proponents, it offered a way out of the straitjacket of traditional strategies of annihilation and attrition toward a more exciting future of control in which "action to induce specific effects rather than simply destruction of the subsystems making up each of these strategic systems or 'centers of gravity' is the foundation [. . .]."[100] Such an approach would produce "rapid dominance over an adversary"[101] and a bold new vision of fighting for the US armed forces that would also require an emphasis on different technologies and force structures away from the heavy formations of the past.

To some observers, these new technologies and thinking represented a transformation of war: that large-scale combat at a foundational level had changed and military strategy needed to reflect it. The new Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, on taking office with the election of the Bush administration, asked Andrew Marshall, the 79-year-old head of the Office of Net Assessment, to produce a paper outlining the new vision of the future.[102] Rumsfeld's subsequent thoughts about the transformation of war were captured in an article entitled "Transforming the Military" published in the influential journal *Foreign Affairs*. In it the Secretary of Defense claimed that "our challenge in this new century is a difficult one: to defend our nation against the unknown, the uncertain, the unseen, and the unexpected. [. . .] But to accomplish it, we must put aside comfortable ways of thinking and planning – take risks and try new things."[103] The idea of transformation was controversial in itself because it entailed going from an established identity rooted firmly in past experiences that had proved to be effective in previous campaigns to an unknown future: it was not a recognized end state in itself, but rather "an ongoing process."[104] into unknown territory, if the premise that everything had changed was correct.

The Rumsfeldian vision of transformation was startlingly ambitious and wide ranging. It necessitated changes in

> the balance in our arsenal between manned and unmanned capabilities, between short- and long-range systems, between stealthy and non-stealthy systems, between shooters and sensors, and between vulnerable and hardened systems. And we must make the leap into the information age, which is the critical foundation of all our transformational efforts.[105]

If the Secretary of Defense was right, then traditional forces structures and approaches to strategy were inapt for the present and future context of war. As such, it would require a tidal wave of change throughout the military establishments of the United States to accord with this revolutionary new landscape of conflict. In itself, it would turn upside-down established ways of thinking and structures that had proved to be relevant and successful on the battlefield as well in sync with classical understandings of strategy, from Sun Tzu to Clausewitz and beyond.

At the start of the GWOT, the armed forces of the United States found themselves facing two engines of dynamic change with regard the formulation of effective military strategy. An internal engine centered on a Secretary of Defense profoundly focused on provoking radical change within the US military establishment and an external one represented by the designated enemies of their state that they had been ordered to fight and defeat. These two dynamics would strongly influence the ability of military leaders in the United States and its principal ally, the United Kingdom, to formulate and execute sound military strategy to achieve the aims of their political elites. Alongside of these critical variables, the inexhaustible pace and development of new technologies would also bear heavily on the thinking and application of force. While the transformation of war thesis may be criticized on numerous levels, the influence of new military technologies from armed drones to mobile internet for military formations was undeniable and would play an extraordinary role in the coming wars.

Questions

1. What is war and why does it persist in human affairs?
2. What is strategy and how is it different from policy?
3. Is Clausewitz's understanding of strategy still relevant in the twenty-first century?
4. To what extent did the development of nuclear weapons represent an evolution or a revolution in the prosecution of warfare?
5. Can wars be limited? Discuss in relation to the Korean and Vietnam Wars of the twentieth century.

Notes

1 Hew Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy." *Survival*, 47, no. 3 (2005) reproduced in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, eds, Thomas G. Mahnken and Joseph A. Maiolo (London: Routledge, 2008), 421.
2 Ibid., 421–422.
3 Elinor C. Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2012), 1.
4 Ibid.
5 Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, with an introduction by J. R. Hamilton (London: Penguin, 1971), 34.
6 It is claimed that the distinctive short and "slightly curved" sword of the Spartans used at the battle of Thermopylae was probably "adopted" [. . .] "from the Persians or other Eastern peoples"—see Ernle Bradford, *Thermopylae: The Battle for the West* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1980), 72.
7 Ibid., 231.
8 Plutarch, *On Sparta*, translated with an introduction by Richard J. A. Talbert (London: Penguin, 2005), 36.
9 See Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Powers* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 77–78.
10 Ibid., 77
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 77–78.
13 Ibid., 84.
14 Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 17. See also Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: OUP, 2010).
15 Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 12.
16 Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds and trans., *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 5.
17 Howard and Paret, eds, *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War*, 113.
18 Ibid., 128.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 87 (Explanation added).
21 Ibid.
22 Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War*, 20.
23 Howard and Paret, eds, *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War*, 77.
24 Ibid., 78.
25 Ibid., 85.
26 Ibid., 75.
27 Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini, *The Art of War*. With an introduction by Charles Messenger (London: Greenhill Books, 1996), vi.
28 Jomini, *The Art of War*, 69.
29 Ibid.
30 Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 13.
31 Jomini, *The Art of War*, 70.

32 Ibid., 49 (Suffix added).
33 Samuel B. Griffith, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War* (Oxford: OUP, 1971), 77.
34 Basil Liddell Hart provided the foreword to Samuel Griffith's text on Sun Tzu and acknowledges the influence of Sun Tzu's ideas on his own work. See ibid., vii.
35 See Brigadier General David A. Depula, *Effects-Based Operations: Change in the Nature of Warfare* (Arlington: Aerospace Education Foundation, 2001) for an explanation of this type of warfare.
36 Griffith, *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*, 66.
37 Ibid., 144.
38 Ibid., 149.
39 This was particularly the case in the recent Libyan campaign in 2011 when NATO's Special Forces were at the forefront of operations on the ground.
40 Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2001) (Kindle Edition).
41 John Keegan, *The Second World War* (London: Pimlico, 1997) (Kindle Edition).
42 Gerald DeGroot, *The Bomb: A Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004) (Kindle Edition).
43 Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, "Are We There Yet? World War II and the Theory of Total War" in *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction, 1937–1945*, eds. Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, and Bernd Greiner (Cambridge: CUP, 2005) (Kindle Edition).
44 Keegan, *The Second World War* (Kindle Edition).
45 Ibid.
46 Correlli Barnett, *The Desert Generals* (London: Orion Books, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
47 Murray and Millett, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*, 422 (Kindle Edition).
48 See *The US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgeny Field Manual*, FM 3–24/ MCWP 3–33.5 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).
49 15 kilotons is cited by Bernard Brodie, see idem *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 211.
50 Gerard J. DeGroot, *The Bomb: A Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004) (Kindle Edition).
51 Ken Booth, "Bernard Brodie" in *Makers of Nuclear Strategy*, eds John Baylis and John Garnett (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 19.
52 Bernard Brodie, ed., *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946).
53 Brodie uses the example of the naval shell gun of 1837 and how it provoked the development of iron armour on ships to counteract it. See Brodie, "The Absolute Weapon" in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, eds Thomas G. Mahnken and Joseph A. Maiolo (London: Routledge, 2008), 187.
54 Ibid., 205.
55 Booth, "Bernard Brodie," 24.
56 Ibid.
57 Albert Wohlstetter, "The Delicate Balance of Terror." *Foreign Affairs* 37, no. 2 (1959).

58 Albert Wohlstetter, "The Delicate Balance of Terror" in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, eds Mahnken and Maiolo, 238.
59 Ibid., 225.
60 See Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: OUP, 1963).
61 Phil Williams, "Thomas Schelling" in *Makers of Nuclear Strategy*, eds Baylis and Garnett, 121.
62 McGeorge Bundy, "The Bishops and the Bomb." *The New York Review of Books*, June 16, 1983.
63 Cited in Lawrence Freedman, "I Exist; Therefore I Deter." *International Security,* 13, no. 1 (Summer 1988): 184.
64 Booth, "Bernard Brodie," 23.
65 Colin S. Gray and Keith Payne, "Victory Is Possible." *Foreign Policy* 39 (Summer 1980): 14.
66 Ibid., 19.
67 See Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), 14.
68 Thomas Mockaitis, "From Counterinsurgency to Peace Enforcement: New Names for Old Games?" *Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 10, no. 2 (1999): 40.
69 Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 9.
70 Ibid., 50–51.
71 David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport: Praeger, 1964).
72 David Galula, "Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice" in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, eds Mahnken and Maiolo, 287.
73 Ibid.
74 Robert Taber, *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2002).
75 Ibid., 12.
76 Ibid., 10.
77 Ibid., 20.
78 Fred Kaplan, *Daydream Believers: How a Few Grand Ideas Wrecked American Power* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2008) (Kindle Edition).
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, 50.
82 Kaplan, *Daydream Believers* (Kindle Edition).
83 See Tim Benbow, *The Magic Bullet? Understanding the 'Revolution in Military Affairs'* (London: Brassey's, 2004), 13.
84 Andrew F. Krepinevich, "Cavalry to Computer: The Pattern of Military Revolutions" in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, eds Mahnken and Maiolo, 365.
85 Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, 54–55.
86 Benbow, *The Magic Bullet?*, 83.
87 David Jordan, "Air and Space Warfare" in *Understanding Modern Warfare*, eds David Jordan, James D. Kiras, David J. Lonsdale, Ian Speller, Christopher Tuck, and C. Dale Walton (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 200.
88 Ibid., 201–202.
89 Ibid.

90 Sloan, *Modern Military Strategy*, 58.
91 Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 2.
92 Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), ix (Second Edition).
93 General Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), xiii.
94 Kaplan, *Daydream Believers* (Kindle Edition).
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Colin McInnes, *Spectator-Sport War: The West and Contemporary Conflict* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 117.
98 Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 347.
99 Ibid., 364.
100 Brigadier General David A. Deptula, "Effects-Based Operations: Change in the Nature of Warfare." *Aerospace Education Foundation Series*, 2001, 6.
101 Ibid.
102 Kaplan, *Daydream Believers* (Kindle Edition).
103 Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military." *Foreign Affairs*, 81, no. 3 (May-June 2002): 23.
104 Ibid., 27.
105 Ibid., 28.

CHAPTER TWO

The Afghan conundrum

Terrorism is the use of violence, usually spectacular, for political purposes often against, but not exclusively, civilian targets by non-state and state actors.

A decade or so on, it is easy to forget the extraordinary impact of 9/11 on the collective imagination of the United States. On that bright September morning, the unimaginable happened when three out of four hijacked commercial jetliners were deliberately flown into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The world literally watched in horror on live TV as the second aircraft slammed into the Twin Towers in New York. As the fires spread, trapped people on the upper floors started jumping to their deaths and without warning the buildings collapsed in a cloud of dust with horrifying noise. By the end of the day the magnitude of the devastation was visibly apparent to everyone thanks to the presence of the global media: nearly 3,000 died,[1] two symbols of the United States either completely destroyed in the case of the global financial hub in New York or significantly damaged with regard the attack on the most powerful military headquarters in existence. What was remarkable about the attacks that far exceeded any other assault on the United States in its history, including Pearl Harbor in 1941, was that they were not caused by another strong nation-state, the key unit of power in international relations. As Fred Kaplan elegantly puts it, "September 11 seemed triggered by a fault line not in the balance of power *among* nations but rather in the balance of power *within* certain nations. The terrorists came of age in Middle Eastern nations, mainly Saudi Arabia and Egypt."[2] The architects of 9/11 were a ragtag group of terrorists called Al Qaeda led by a Saudi radical, Osama Bin Laden, and before 2001 very few people outside of counterterrorism circles had actually heard of them. The sheer levels of devastation and international public humiliation at the

hands of a small group of terrorists that numbered no more than 1,000 in 2001 generated unprecedented endogenous and exogenous pressures on policy makers with regard to generating an effective response. To a great extent the Boeing airliners crashed not just into American buildings, but also into traditional elite thinking structures across political and military spheres with equally catastrophic consequences. According to George Bush's memoirs that offer some insight into the initial thinking, "the first plane could have been an accident. The second was definitely an attack. The third was a declaration of war."[3]

Terrorism as an act of war

Responding to an act of terrorism as an act of war was one of the most profound radicalizations of the normal political elite decision making in the United States. Instead of treating the terrorist attack as a criminal offense and dealing with it accordingly through civil authorities with the military in support, a role reversal soon became starkly apparent. This decision was apparently taken at a National Security Council meeting on the night of September 11, 2001, which decided that, "the United States would punish not just the perpetrators of the attacks, but also those who harbored them."[4] This broader "collective responsibility" approach was in sharp contrast to traditional responses to terrorist incidents that took many years of painstaking criminal investigation with civil agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation or FBI, for example, building a comprehensive case against perpetrators to be dealt with by the judicial system in the United States. The most celebrated and recent case of dealing with a terrorist incident prior to 2001 was the conviction of Timothy McVeigh, a homegrown radical, whose activities led to the destruction of a federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995 who was arrested, tried, and eventually executed for the death of 168 US citizens. Donald Rumsfeld sheds much light on the underpinning logic of the radical policy change in his memoirs by revealing that "the struggle that been brought to our shores went beyond law enforcement and criminal justice. Our responsibility was to deter and dissuade others from thinking that terrorism against the United States could advance their cause."[5] From this perspective, the proposed US response was less about bringing the perpetrators to justice than using the destruction of Al Qaeda as an object lesson to others who may wish to emulate them. It was a punitive or punishment approach to terrorism. Furthermore, the external character of the 9/11 attacks, launched from a seemingly lawless collapsing state sheltering radical groups in Asia, added even greater impetus for the application and predominance of military means as the lead response to 9/11 because it was well outside the jurisdictional reach of the law enforcement agencies of the United States.

The highly unusual decision-making matrix in the United States caused by powerful internal and external pressures was also influenced to a significant degree by inexperienced political leadership of the highest level. The relatively new and contested president, George W. Bush, possessed very little experience in dealing with crises of any magnitude, let alone a watershed event in international relations. Nevertheless, as the political leader of the United States, the thoughts and actions of President Bush on September 11 set the organizational climate for the eventual response. From the outset, the president imagined the events of 9/11 through a war lens. In some respects, given the magnitude of the devastation in New York and Washington, it was hardly surprising, but nevertheless an inaccurate reading that equated the effects of the attacks to a fundamental condition of human existence that clearly was not supportable. War as Clausewitz reminds us "does not consist of a single short blow"[6] and Al Qaeda only had the capability to sustain one major assault that has never been replicated in over a decade. However, George Bush was adamant and, on the evening of September 11, his "first instinct was to tell the American people that we were a nation at war. But as I watched the carnage on TV, I realized that the country was still in shock. Declaring war could further contribute to the anxiety. I decided to wait one day."[7] The timing of 9/11 caught the presidential management team scattered across the country with Secretary of State Colin Powell and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), General Hugh Shelton abroad,[8] Donald Rumsfeld acting as a first responder in the damaged Pentagon helping the injured, Condoleezza Rice, his National Security Advisor, and Dick Cheney, the Vice-President, were in the Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) in Washington.[9] President Bush was in Florida visiting the Emma E. Booker Elementary School when news of the attacks reached him.[10] From that moment onwards, the Secret Service[11] and advice from Condoleezza Rice[12] to stay away from Washington kept him away physically from his key decision makers until later that evening when he returned to Washington. In those critical hours by himself, notwithstanding communications technologies, the president found himself isolated from his key civilian and political advisors who could have offered in close proximity a different take on 9/11, but by the time he arrived in Washington at 6.30 p.m., George W. Bush went almost immediately to addressing the nation.[13] As such, the dislocation of the presidential cabinet on 9/11 cannot be discounted as a factor for the lack of imagination about alternatives to the war analogy and spotlights the individual role that President Bush played in setting the tone for the response.

Nation-states are the most powerful actors in the international system and the United States is without question the *primus inter pares* in the world in terms of its economic, military, and political capital. With a gross domestic product (2010 figures) of 14.6 trillion dollars and over

317 million citizens,[14] the United States is a superpower among the most powerful states. In this light, the decision to declare a "war on terror" on a loose affiliation and relatively low budget terrorist outfit with at most a few hundred hard-core members remains deeply puzzling. A declaration of war is perhaps the most extreme posture that a state can adopt in international relations and comes with many caveats. It denotes a time of supreme emergency/crisis and is indicative of some kind of structural realignment in international affairs. Under such emergency measures, states internally mobilize their populations, psychologically and socially for conditions of hardship and sacrifice, yet equally the process is a two-way interflow. In today's environment, this means greater levels of spending on defense and an inevitable increase in the national debt which poses very real costs to ordinary citizens in the form of higher taxes or potentially economic decline. Waging war has always been with a few exceptions and, more so in the modern age, an expensive outlay of capital that has the inherent property to bankrupt states with the same deleterious consequences as losing the conflict itself. From Athens in a bygone era[15] to collapsed African states in contemporary times, spending on the accouterments and activities of war has brought strong and weak states to their knees throughout history. From a social perspective, however, altering the social expectations of its citizens with the shift and cost of moving to a "war" footing, the state must also address heightened social expectations because people will demand to know whether their representatives in arms are winning or losing. This pitfall was recognized by influential members of the Bush administration, especially Donald Rumsfeld, who felt that "the word 'war' left the impression that there would be combat waged with bullets and artillery and then a clean end to the conflict with a surrender – a winner and a loser, and closure [. . .] It also led many to believe that the conflict would be won by bullets alone."[16] The Secretary of Defense was leery of this approach and also felt uneasy about the use of the phrase "war on terror."[17]

In an external sense, a declaration of war automatically assumes legitimacy about those a state is fighting.[18] This was, and remains, an unsustainable proposition in relation to Al Qaeda. Of more consequence than the propaganda coup that a poor choice of words handed to a minuscule collection of terrorists was the impact that this perceived "war" would have on international relations as a whole. Much of the structural effect or how the arrangement and relationships of states in the world are affected is intimately connected to power differentials in world affairs. When a weak state goes to war with another weak state or a medium power with a lesser power, typified by the conflict between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands in 1982, then the ramifications for the international order are relatively negligible in view that their influence globally in economic, military, and political terms is limited. When the most powerful state on the planet declares a war, whose currency is at the heart

of the international financial system, whose military arsenal contains the best weapons in existence, conventional and nuclear, and whose political leaders are the most influential in the world, then the effect is profoundly systemic. At the political level, allies and opponents of the United States were forced to align themselves in relation to this new war posture whether they agreed or not with its rationale. A superpower cannot be ignored in international society, except by the powerless and the stateless. All others must readjust their alignment within the overarching structure of the states system or incur penalties of one form or another from the most powerful. In the aftermath of 9/11, this was demonstrated by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invoking Article 5 that states an attack on one member is an attack on them all.[19] It was done as a form of reassurance to the United States, but in reality reflected a disproportionate response to an act of terrorism on a member state.

Asymmetric warfare involves warring parties with significant disparities in terms of military power, strategies, and tactics. In the modern age it has been characterized in recent campaigns by the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs)/roadside bombs and suicide tactics against premier league conventional forces.

An asymmetric response to an asymmetric attack

The decision of the Bush administration to declare a "war on terror" in the light of the 9/11 attacks has generated long-term implications both domestically and internationally that have only now been fully realized in terms of their scope and impact. Of more significance, however, concerns the decision to give primacy to America's military establishment as the key mechanism to respond to the challenge posed by the Al Qaeda terrorist group. In many respects, it would seem logical in the aftermath of almost 3,000 dead citizens that an attack of this nature, traditionally on a scale only achievable by military forces such as the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Navy in 1941 that caused over 2,000 casualties[20] or by natural disasters, would provoke an appropriate military response. However, the military forces of a state are not geared ideationally or materially toward fighting small numbers of terrorists usually located out of uniform in civil populations. Premier military organizations imagine and fight war against their equivalents in other states. Their role is to win wars through combat with the armed forces of other nations, and whether under conditions of peace or conflict, this is the core preoccupation of state-based militaries.

This condition was not peculiar to the United States, but in view of the sheer size of the US defense budget from the Cold War to 2001, it was particularly orientated in terms of force structures, doctrines, and strategies toward high-level conventional and nuclear, if necessary, warfighting against other states. There existed just a small component within these extraordinarily powerful air, land, and sea formations dedicated toward unconventional warfare innocuously called Special Forces with specifically counterterrorism units known as Delta Force and Seal Team 6,[21] but their influence within conventional formations was in 2001 strictly limited. Indeed, their cultural capital among the armed forces as a whole at the turn of the twenty-first century was not terribly high[22] so the likelihood of them being used in an effective manner was reduced by virtue that the vast majority of the officer corps were not Special Forces/anti-terrorism experts by training.

By handing authority to the US military establishment to fight the "war on terror," the Bush administration was in fact giving them a task for which they were unsuited, especially in the light of their mainstream skill sets, equipment, training, and strategies. Beyond the purely material aspects, the challenge of fighting a war against terrorists was ideationally out of kilter with the mindset of military elites who had been trained throughout their careers for state-based warfare. In addition, this sense of dislocation away from their traditional orientation, reinforced by either experience or constantly war-gaming likely scenarios, was heightened by the complete absence of a plan to deal with such a situation through the medium of conventional forces. Everything in the military field is scripted, from daily life including routines, dress codes, and social norms to lessons in the classroom and training. Facing the unexpected is generally disconcerting, but for the military, it is doubly so, especially when asked by political elites for a plan of action against an unexpected enemy when one does not exist. The seemingly innocuous decision to hand responsibility to the military establishment to fight the "war on terror" was actually a foundational and perplexing challenge to the armed forces of the United States. It was one that required decades, if not centuries, of habits of mind and thinking to be put to one side in order to reorientate and reorganize toward a largely unknown enemy who fought in ways that were unfamiliar to the vast bulk of their formations and thinking. In terms of ideas alone, it would take conservative military institutions years to adjust to this new way of warfare and, inevitably, initial responses would be dominated by uncertainty and referral back to methods that had proved to be effective in other conflicts, albeit of a different nature. From the perspective of just equipment, a process of adaptation and inevitably a crude one would characterize early operational strategies. At the upper spectrum of material resources, a $2 billion B-2A Stealth bomber designed for nuclear attacks against powerful states requires considerably modification to be applied effectively, if at all, at the conventional level against terrorists. At lower levels, tanks and armored

formations are again ill designed to conduct anti-terrorism operations in civil societies that may involve fighting in built-up or urban areas. The sheer range of adaptation was substantial in scope and would pose operational and tactical problems until a new generation of counterterrorism equipment that normally takes years to develop could be introduced on a mass scale to conventional forces. Without question, these functional issues would have to be enmeshed within a complex institutional learning cycle in which military organizations with little or no knowledge of terrorist methods and procedures would absorb lessons through trial and error on the ground with hopefully an efficient feedback loop from the front lines to the headquarters and to the requisitions and training process. The multi-dimensional challenge of assigning the prosecution of the "war on terror" to the military was simply fundamental in scope and consequence to a degree that perhaps political elites or wider society in the United States never really grasped.

A mechanism to respond: Central Command

The application of force by political elites in international relations has traditionally occurred through the mechanisms of their armed forces. In purely functional terms, this used to be an ad hoc affair with temporary collections of military might such as an army brought together for a specific purpose with a hard core of permanent warriors who directed operations in the field. Over time, with the development of established state formations that are in existence today, the application of force evolved hand-in-hand with the emergence of a professional strata of soldiers in society with often permanent and large armies available for operations. As Sinisa Malesevic comments,

> the professionalization of the military that started in the seventeenth century with the first military academies and properly trained officers, reached its pinnacle in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. From now on the military is run by highly specialized professionals that undergo long institutionalized training.[23]

By the turn of the twenty-first century, the profession of arms and the distribution of military power in the United States alone had reached new levels of sophistication, functional devolution of responsibility, and potency. In order to tackle the global challenges that it had faced during the Cold War, the United States set up a series of regional commands with responsibility for directing operations in a specific geographical area such as Europe or the Pacific. By 1983, however, a new command was created that has perhaps covered the most active operational theater in recent times and it was titled Central Command (CENTCOM) to encompass

"the 'central' area of the globe located between the European and Pacific Commands."[24] The remit of CENTCOM was vast from the Middle East to East Africa and Central Asia,[25] and prior to 9/11, it had fought one of the most successful modern military campaigns in history against Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War of 1991 under the direction of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf. The Gulf War of 1991 was a watershed in military affairs in itself with the application of high technology weapons such as Tomahawk cruise missiles and laser-guided bombs in such profusion and with such decisiveness that the ground combat phase only lasted four days. It also demonstrated that this relatively new command could deploy well over half a million American personnel with hundreds of thousands of soldiers from coalition partners and orchestrated one of the most dynamic and successful military campaigns in history.[26] Since 1991, CENTCOM had also been engaged in monitoring activities in Iraq through flying air sorties over the country and directed Operation Desert Fox in 1998 – a short punitive campaign against Saddam's sites of suspected weapons of mass destruction. It was quite clearly one of the most engaged commands in the United States military establishment.

Joint warfare is the deliberate integration and interoperability of the three conventional components of a military (air force, army, and navy) in a coordinated campaign.

CENTCOM is a globally unique military command in terms of its scope and power. An important property of CENTCOM is its inherently joint nature. In the late 1970s and 1980s, a drive occurred across the United States that migrated into a transnational trend across Western Europe and especially Britain, for the three separate armed forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force) to become more interoperable and flexible to work together rather than as the traditional single service commands. In the United States, the controversial Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986 that pushed the three services toward developing joint doctrine encapsulated this drive.[27] The benefits of the joint approach were numerous, from a greater understanding of how different services worked, often a cause of Clausewitzian "friction" under the stress of combat to a more efficient pooling of assets for operations. For the United States, in particular, during the 1970s and 1980s, numerous operations had embarrassingly failed or suffered significant operational problems from the rescue of American hostages off Cambodia called the *Mayaguez* incident of 1975, the ill-fated Eagle Claw rescue of Iranian hostages in 1980 and the various setbacks during the invasion of Grenada or Operation Urgent Fury in 1983. Many of the problems could be associated with a failure of various elements from different services to coordinate their activities and work together effectively that covered the tactical level right up to operational

and strategic command networks and procedures. Another major issue also stemmed from institutional competition for a slice of the operational pie. For all military services, operational combat represents the apogee of their professional development and also validates or invalidates concepts/doctrines. In addition, it carries with it important societal recognition that translates in cultural terms into prestige and greater leverage during high-level budget negotiations with political elites. The competitive state of nature between the three armed services in the modern age seeking funds for increasingly sophisticated and costly military assets within the scope of a constrained peacetime defense budget inevitably generated this negative operational dynamic of seeking a piece of the action that was most apparent with Operation Urgent Fury.[28]

CENTCOM was designed to be different. In this military organization, all three services would be working in a permanent joint command, rather than a temporary ad hoc collection of units brought together for a specific purpose. In a structural sense, this arrangement within CENTCOM was almost counter-cultural to the wider organization of the three individual services whereby officers worked within narrow parochial parameters with people wearing the same uniform and with the same mindset. However, the inherently joint properties of CENTCOM were limited in a few rather important ways. First and foremost, only the command arrangement was truly joint. CENTCOM was commanded by a four-star officer, either a full Army or Air Force General or Admiral with a plethora of less senior command officers (three star and below), all from the three separate services. A good insight of how CENTCOM functions is provided by the former deputy commander of CENTCOM, Lieutenant General Michael DeLong who describes in his memoirs how it was explained to him by his predecessor on taking up his post in 2000 that "CENTCOM is divided into six directorates, known as "Js" for joint," he said. "J1 is personnel. J2 is intel. J3, operations. J4, logistics. J5, plans and programs. And J6 is communications and information technology," and that "every morning you'll get briefed on what's going on in our twenty-five countries, what happened the night before, the current status of all our troops, planes, and ships."[29] The scale of the responsibility of CENTCOM was vast and covered to a large degree some of the most volatile areas of the world. The sheer amount of information being processed by this command alone on a daily basis and in peacetime was immense for a relatively small command staff of around 1,000.[30] Nevertheless, the scope of seamless jointness effectively ended at the command level because CENTCOM did not possess its own operational forces because they were provided by the three individual services. This was a significant cleavage in the drive for unity among the armed forces.

In some respects, this was a necessary condition because otherwise, CENTCOM would become, in effect, a fourth arm of the nation with a

plethora of implications that would include institutional, cultural, and operational dimensions for the other services. As it stood, the very existence of Central Command obviated the need for other very important state mechanisms for the direction of military force. It is important to note that during the US ascent to military pre-eminence among Western nations during World War II, the nation witnessed a massive accumulation of military forces across the world, literally millions of soldiers, sailors, and airmen, in different theaters. The sheer size of these forces necessitated that the very command structures of the state itself had to change as well. Mirroring the British model, the US military developed the JCS in World War II[31] whereby the head of the respective services acted as the professional military advisor to the political elites in times of crisis concerning the application of their military forces. The selection of the head of a service is a particular and exceptionally important process within a military institution because the chosen individual needs to exude the innate preferences of the service and to interface with political elites to protect its interests. Such individuals tend to have great experience in military matters and competency as the service has selected them constantly throughout their career for higher office. This gradual winnowing process ensures that by the time an officer becomes head of the service that they reflected to a very high degree the ethos of the institution. Over time, the United States altered the Joint Chiefs structure to improve the efficiency of the mechanism by creating a "Chairman" post so that just one military leader could speak for all three services as the professional military advisor to the president.[32] The Joint Chiefs mechanism was an important component of the state for it pooled the most eminent military minds and representatives into an accessible forum for political elites to consult and seek counsel so that major strategic errors could be avoided. Unwittingly, the creation of CENTCOM provided a means for political elites to ignore the Joint Chiefs mechanism and to deal directly with a component commander, thus to conduct military operations without, if they chose to do so, referring to the collective wisdom of the most important senior officers of the three institutions. It had the potential to accumulate the direction of coercive power within the hands of the few political elites and more junior military elites without the benefits of sage counsel from the key representatives of the armed services.

Civil-military relations and Operation Enduring Freedom

The state of civil-military relations in the United States was far from perfect in 2001. It was in large part provoked by the appointment of a very powerful and hands-on Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, who it has

been claimed had an agenda to transform the US military,[33] though this is something that he strongly asserts in his memoirs did not originate with him, but rather with President Bush.[34] The levels of division between the reforming Secretary of Defense and his command reached an unfortunate culminating point the day before the 9/11 attacks when Rumsfeld delivered a speech that indicated that "a serious threat, to the security of the United States of America" was "the Pentagon bureaucracy."[35] Such a public speech was hardly an indication of confidence in his own office or the hundreds of thousands of people who directly worked for him, but it does provide a sense of the levels of division between the senior manager and his staff within the defense establishment. His relationship with senior military elites was equally fractious, and these tensions between Rumsfeld and his senior military commanders have been pithily set out by Seymour Hersh that "Rumsfeld's personal contempt for many of the senior generals and admirals who were promoted to top jobs during the Clinton Administration was widely known [. . .] Gradually, Rumsfeld succeeded in replacing those officers in senior Joint Staff positions who challenged his view."[36]

This highly unusual organizational climate with the Defense Department did not lend itself toward a harmonious relationship between top-level political and military elites. Indeed, it created the conditions for military ineffectiveness at the highest levels of the chain of command. Rumsfeld admits his snowflakes or "memo" approach to management was a far from perfect system as,

> these short memos became my method of communicating directly with the individuals I worked with closely. Some would say they developed into an unrelenting snowstorm. They were raw thoughts that I dictated into my still trusty Dictaphone [. . .] some missed the mark.[37]

A tense and frosty atmosphere between military chiefs and the Secretary of Defense automatically stifled trust, confidence, and the dissemination of sound military advice. The removal of senior military staff with more compliant replacements was a recipe for skewed group think[38] in which a civilian elite with limited military experience and knowledge would determine overarching strategy with crucially constrained cognitive parameters. It did not encourage the formulation of a coherent grand strategy and to a large account explain its absence for much of his term of office.

This unusual situation carried with it a number of strategic and operational consequences that would be thrown into sharp relief by the onset of a crisis. Much would depend on the porousness of the interface between the Office of Secretary of Defense and CENTCOM and, critically, the personality of the military commander. In the past, civilian elites had tried to decisively and possibly disastrously influence the operational strategy of CENTCOM during the Gulf War of 1991. The then Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney,

proposed simply ridiculous plans for responding to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait that would have been costly, if not humiliating, in terms of grand strategy, operational effectiveness, and the likelihood of incurring significant numbers of US casualties.[39] The commander of CENTCOM at the time, General Schwarzkopf, successfully resisted such profoundly warped political influences and managed to fight the war in a manner that was consistent with wider US Army/military thinking with spectacular results. In contrast, in 2001, the commander of CENTCOM, General Tommy Franks, proved to be more compliant to the influences of the Secretary of Defense. To a significant degree, Franks' particular style of management facilitated the adoption of some of the more radical options put forward by Donald Rumsfeld. Leaders after all set the tone and climate within an organization in terms of how people respond to ideas and concepts. According to a CSIS report on American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century, "climate is essentially *how members of an organization feel about the organization*." It asserts that "many factors influence organizational climate; among the important factors are perceptions about the system of rewards and punishments, the flow of communications up and down the command chain [. . .] and the example set by leaders."[40] Leaders are pivotal in military organizations: they can be the wellspring of victory with a historical legacy that continues for hundreds of years such as Washington and Wellington to name just two, yet equally they can be a catalyst for disaster and paralysis. A leader can inspire military elites to achieve maximum effectiveness or they can unwittingly demoralize the personnel within an organization through thoughtless actions. The very position of leader attracts attention from subordinates, and their actions and inflections carry enormous weight. Edgar Schein suggests that "one of the most powerful mechanisms that founders, leaders, managers, or even colleagues have available for communicating what they believe in or care about is what they systematically pay attention to."[41] In other words, communication skills and an intimate awareness of how actions, comments, or behavior can have a profound resonance within an organization are important for leaders to be aware of. An insight into the leadership style of General Tommy Franks by his newly arrived deputy in 2000 during his handover with his predecessor offers an insider perspective on the sort of organizational climate that he wittingly or unwittingly created at CENTCOM. This officer reveals, "Franks was a hard man to get to know. He didn't talk much, and he didn't necessarily like having people around him. He could be cold and distant. I like humor; Franks rarely did, except in private."[42]

Franks' style of leadership was remote and idiosyncratic to a significant degree. Much of it may have stemmed from his personal background because he started out his career in the armed forces after dropping out of college and enlisting as a private soldier.[43] Therefore, his formative time in the military was not as an officer-cadet, but as the most junior non-decision-

making soldier who was geared and trained for the tactical dimension of strategy or the personal engagement with the enemy. Eventually, he earned his commission via the Officer Candidate School (OCS) scheme and specialized in the artillery.[44] One of the most striking features of his autobiography is the constant homespun reference to his rural parochial upbringing in Oklahoma and Texas (Midland was a hometown that he shared with President Bush and his wife, Laura). These are states in America famous for masculine traits of circumspection in personality and adherence to conservative time-honored values such as patriarchy and social order. These qualities made Franks a detached figure that was somewhat out of place dealing with urbane civilian elites represented by the Secretary of Defense. His almost complete deference to Rumsfeld and his ideas is then perhaps unsurprising in view of his background and personal development within the US Army. Franks never possessed, for comparison purposes, the self-assuredness and confidence of General Schwarzkopf, the son of a general and a West Point graduate, following closely in the footsteps of his father,[45] who were social equals, if not superior, to civilian elite equivalents. Of more importance, however, Franks was one of the few military commanders who actually admired Rumsfeld. In his memoirs, he comments that, "some Secretaries of Defense saw themselves as five-stars positioned slightly above a constellation of four-star flag officers. Rumsfeld wasn't so much elevated above us as he was in an orbit all his own."[46]

In the harsh light of the strategic consequences of the Global War on Terror, not least for the United States and its military, this description of Rumsfeld appears either overly generous or naïve and it is without question a minority perspective within military elite circles. It does, however, offer a glimpse of why Franks accommodated the demands of a radical Secretary of Defense because he was in part an adherent to the Rumsfeldian vision of warfighting. This in itself begs the question of why Franks was so happy to adopt such a new approach to warfare, but, to a great degree, it mirrored his own career post-Vietnam when the US Army had transformed itself from a conscription army to an all-volunteer forces and adopted radical new approaches to warfare in the form of *AirLand Battle* doctrine and the IT revolution that was particularly strong in the artillery branch with a raft of new technologies such as copperhead laser-guided munitions[47] and multiple launch rocket launchers to name a few. General Franks was one of a generation of officers whose careers moved forward in this ideational and material flux of innovation that swept through the US armed forces. Rumsfeld's ideas concerning transformation could easily have been interpreted passively as either the next phase of this development or, more critically, a skewed evolution. The cheap and light option inherently possessed huge scope for embedded risk and contrasted sharply with the heavy and expensive approach that offered a higher tolerance for risk as sheer numbers can often compensate for a variety of errors on the

battlefield. Regardless of the case, Franks took the minority perspective at the height of his career development in his most important and influential position in the US military and without fear of the consequences for his future promotion. Interestingly, at the end of his tenure at CENTCOM, Franks chose retirement over promotion to head of the US Army, a very unusual state of affairs for a career-minded officer.[48] His justification to Donald Rumsfeld for not accepting the post remains puzzling because he claimed that he was "a warfighter, not a manager."[49] Some commentators suggest the admiration channels between the two men flowed purely in one direction. Fred Kaplan comments, "Franks, by no means a strategist, was widely regarded as a dim bulb, even by fellow officers. Rumsfeld, by nature impatient with people who weren't smart, despised Franks and wanted to get rid of him after the Afghanistan war."[50] Rumsfeld in his memoirs is less forthright, but conspicuously not overflowing. The Secretary notes of Franks that he had been appointed by President Clinton and as such they had not had much contact and that "it took some time for us to get used to each other. My habit of asking probing questions was new to Franks; he needed to become comfortable with my queries and confident of my regard for him."[51] Rumsfeld argues that they developed "an effective working relationship"[52] but his emphasis on who appointed him and choice of language to describe his relationship with his top military leader reveals a great deal. Of more importance than the Secretary's opinion, President Bush liked General Franks[53] and they shared much in common in terms of background and the president, not Rumsfeld, was the commander in chief.

Civilian elites and US military strategy

One of the remarkable features of US strategy formulation in the initial days, weeks, and months after 9/11 and beyond was the abrogation of military leadership at the highest levels of grand and operational strategy. The marginalization of the JCS and the appointment of a highly compliant Chairman of the JCS in the form of Air Force General Richard Myers had an extraordinary effect on the influence of military leadership in policy formulation. According to Thomas Ricks, Myers,

> had ascended to the chairmanship somewhat by accident, having been selected to be the number-two officer on the Joint Chiefs by people who later said they never envisioned him to go on to the top slot. Myer's term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was characterized by an extraordinary deference to Rumsfeld.[54]

Rumsfeld ensured that within a relatively short space of time, via the US military appointments systems, he had top military personnel in place who

would not generate significant opposition. The Secretary of Defense applied his experiences in the pharmaceutical industry as the Chief Executive Officer of G.D. Searle from 1977 to the mid-1980s[55] to introduce a corporate approach to management with the Department of Defense. Rumsfeld's style of management that had proved to be very successful in the business world can be summed up in his own words: "Prune. Prune businesses, products, activities and people."[56] There was nothing unusual about the managerial trend within military circles, especially in the twentieth century when armed forces expanded exponentially in response to the total wars and, of course, during the Cold War as well, but there was a delicate trade-off between manager and combat leader. As Morris Janowitz warns, given the unique social character of fighting organizations geared toward applying lethal amounts of force, "the military establishment requires a balance between the three roles of heroic leader, military manager, and military technologist, a balance which varies at each level in the hierarchy of authority."[57] The inherent danger in Rumsfeld's pruning corporate approach to management of defense and fighting organizations was that it risked indiscriminateness that could fail to recognize these fundamental distinctions and how important the existence of all three elements of manager, warrior, and technologist were in generating military effectiveness. Unfortunately, such seemingly savvy corporate maneuverings by civilian elites effectively shut down top-level mechanisms designed to smoothly integrate and coordinate the efforts of military and political elites in times of crisis, which to a significant degree explains why a coherent grand strategy did not emerge in the United States under his tenure as Secretary of Defense prosecuting the Global War on Terror. Rumsfeld's tinkering disrupted the system that had proved to be extremely effective in the first Gulf War of 1991 and for much of the Cold War with the exception of the Vietnam War when another overly powerful Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, again ensured the marginalization of military elites in top-level defense strategy formulation.

Perhaps the most deleterious aspect of this entire process of civilian elite dominance in military planning was its influence on critical operational level activities through its influence on military elites in CENTCOM. By accommodating the Rumsfeldian approach to warfare, General Franks, in essence, gave up the most important facet of military leadership at the highest levels: the integration of autonomous military expertise to fulfill the political aims of the campaign. Instead, he became his own antithesis: a manager, a corporate one of war, whose focus was skewed toward tactical activities, not the operational level of war. The corporate mangerialization of military elites and the abrogation of the most important aspects of their military leadership role are without question the noteworthy features of post-9/11 military planning in the United States. It was not purely a process of total dominance by an assertive Secretary of Defense determined to obtain

complete control over his military elites, but rather a two-way interaction or a process in which compliant and key members of the military elite were happy to give up, consciously or not, critical parts of their command responsibilities. Together, it was a recipe for strategic paralysis and a massive vacuum in terms of grand strategy in the absence of any viable alternative by civilian elites. Rumsfeld may have wanted utter control of the military elites and the direction of war planning, but the price would be very high for the United States in terms of the expenditure of blood and treasure in two subsequent campaigns.

Operational consequences for military planning

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) is somewhat of an enigma in the annals of military achievement. For some, it was a remarkable campaign that exuded innovation, low casualties, and a vision of the future: a model to be adopted elsewhere.[58] For others, the very limitations of the campaign merely set the scene for the emergence of the vicious insurgency that continues to consume the country to the present day.[59] What is for sure, however, is that the strategic and operational planning process involved in OEF was neither smooth nor uncomplicated. In fact, it was a model of how not to run a campaign and this element begs the question of whether the outcome in Afghanistan was planned or merely fortuitous. Without a shadow of a doubt, Afghanistan was somewhat of a perplexing conundrum for military planners in the United States. It had always been a fearsome environment for foreign forces to conduct operations, from the time of Alexander the Great through to the British Empire and the latter lost an entire army there in the first Afghan War of 1838–1842. Of course, the last army to suffer in Afghanistan was the Soviet one that had withdrawn in 1989 after suffering significant casualties almost 14,000 casualties[60] over the course of a decade long stint of operations. Afghanistan is a land of extremes, from empty deserts, lush river valleys, and snow-tipped mountains to boiling temperatures in summer and freezing winters. In terms of location, it is a landlocked country, surrounded by a variety of stable and unstable neighbors (Iran and Pakistan to name two) with mountainous regions and poor communications across the country. By 2001, Afghanistan was controlled by the Taliban, a Pakistani-sponsored radical Islamist movement that had emerged victorious out of its civil war after the departure of the Soviets. As a counter-modern group, it had subsequently imposed draconian and medieval policies on the long-suffering population of the country. To confuse matters more, the 32 million strong Afghan population[61] was not at all homogeneous. It was comprised of different ethnic groups such as

Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks to mention some of the larger parts of the overall population[62] with particular loyalties and ethnic identities.

For the United States, initial war planning was complicated by the fact that there was not a war plan for conducting operations in Afghanistan and it was horribly rushed. When Rumsfeld initially asked General Franks how long it would take to produce an operational plan for Afghanistan a few days after 9/11, the answer was "two months."[63] The Secretary of Defense replied, "General, I'm afraid we don't have that much time" and gave him a "few days" to produce a "first cut of a plan."[64] The absence of an existing and worked-up plan of action meant that there was no institutional memory or carefully considered thinking about how to go about prosecuting a campaign in such a harsh and unforgiving environment because some of Afghanistan's mountains were in excess of 10,000 feet high that possessed profound implications for standard battlefield helicopters that would struggle in such thin air. It would place an emphasis on more specialized and much larger, though less numerous, heavy lift assets such as twin rotor Chinook helicopters. In addition, perhaps the most pressing problem was simply what were the war aims of the Bush Administration, the critical basis of its grand strategy. Was the intention of operations to separate the Al Qaeda elements from the mainstream population and target them accordingly or was it to take down the entire Taliban regime that had sponsored and was offering shelter to the perpetrators of 9/11? Or was it to persuade/coerce a moderate element within the Taliban to reject the presence of Al Qaeda and work with the United States? These large questions remained largely unanswered for much of the initial phase of operations and, consequently, have dogged the formulation of an effective long-term strategy.

Military options and thinking in CENTCOM

It is now well documented in various memoirs of key individuals how CENTCOM developed a military response in relation to operations in Afghanistan. These options by themselves reveal deep-seated cultural preferences and how thinking about Afghanistan was influenced by a slavish adherence to well-tested models of fighting. This is a point underlined by Deborah Avant about military institutions in general that "even when civilians require that the military meet a threat for which it is not prepared, the organization is likely to produce fairly traditional doctrine and planning, which may be ill suited to the goals set by the civilians."[65] It begs the question of why do military organizations revert to strategic default modes in times of crisis. The case of CENTCOM and planning for OEF fit well with Max Weber's notion of how a social order can become an

"iron cage" that will perpetuate certain courses of action for long periods of time.[66] Previous models that have proved to be successful in warfare continue to heavily influence military social orders in the West. After all, military organizations do not perpetuate models that promote failure, and defeat in war inevitably produces change of some form to the existing social order. Nevertheless, this idea is contested. Stephen Rosen argues "defeat in war is neither necessary nor sufficient to produce innovation. Defeat by itself does not tell a military organization what future wars will look like, only that its preparations for the war just ended were not adequate."[67] This line of argument, however, is limited to the notion of innovation within military organizations that remains a complex process at best and does not encompass radical challenges to the social order that catastrophic defeat often produces. The impact of the Vietnam War on the US armed forces was quite profound in scope and contributed to a radical transformation of ideas, strategies, and concepts that evolved into the Gulf War model that proved so successful in 1991. The focus on social orders within military organizations inevitably draws focus on the cultural aspects that perpetuate stability or order with regard to action in times of conflict. Alexander Wendt suggests, "*culture is a self-fulfilling prophecy.* Given cause to interact in some situation, actors need to define the situation before they can choose a course of action. These definitions will be based on at least two considerations: their own identities and interests."[68]

In view of CENTCOM"s extraordinary success in 1991, the Gulf War model was imprinted within the organizational culture of the command as almost an "ideal" kind of warfare to be followed in times of crisis. In addition, as a relatively new organization with a limited history/record of fighting history, unlike the services from which it sprang, the impact of the Gulf War can be best explained as a foundational, perhaps even transformational, event in terms of the memory of the organization. This memory would have been reinforced by the experiences of senior personnel in position of authority. In the case of General Tommy Franks, an officer who served in the Gulf War of 1991 and whose record of service ran from the Vietnam War[69] to the twenty-first century with the bulk of which in the post-Vietnam US Army, the pressure to conform to the most successful model of warfare in this period would have been quite overwhelming. A final argument in this respect also resonates with the appeal of the Gulf War model to the bulk of the officer corps in the US armed forces. First and foremost, it was an overwhelmingly conventional option. It used the preferred technologies of all three services–fighter aircraft and bombers from the US Air Force, aircraft carriers and tomahawk missiles, fired from ships and submarines of the US Navy–and possessed a land component that allowed the US Army to deploy its most powerful assets, tanks, artillery, infantry, and battlefield helicopters. It was a rainbow model of warfare that remarkably suited and united all three services under the "joint" banner.

For officers steeped in a conventional operations background, the Gulf War model was a natural solution or had become structurally imbued into the ideology[70] of CENTCOM or what Wendt citing Durkheim described as "'collective' representations or knowledge. These are knowledge structures held by groups which generate macro-level patterns in individual behavior over time."[71]

In the same way that Norbert Elias described spatial arrangements in a court society forming "the precipitate of a social unit"[72] so do success models within a military organization in an ideational sense. They provide knowledge structures that bound the social reality of human agency within the organization, particularly with a total military institution. As Goffman reminds us, "a total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time."[73] Military organizations, like prisons, asylums, and monasteries, provide the supreme example of a total institution whereby social life is concentrated around barracks or a base and personal/private lives are intertwined to an extent that is unconceivable to the vast majority of society who do not possess an existence in such entities. The former deputy commander of CENTCOM, Lt-General DeLong, provides a brief glimpse into the all-encompassing nature of the organization when he first arrived to take up his position and explains "the deputy commander, like the commander, has a large house at CENTCOM. It was on the base, less than a mile from the CENTCOM building, so my commute would be easy."[74] DeLong also reveals how far the "total" nature of his work extended physically into his private life because "the military, in their wisdom, had replicated the deputy commander's office in the deputy commander's home, so that when I went home it was like going back to the office."[75] The virtual inseparability of private and professional lives within a military organization makes personnel extremely susceptible to dominant knowledge structures that encapsulate success models in warfare at an almost unconscious level within the group of personnel assigned to a command and especially elite decision makers. At the level of individuals, years of training toward a specific type of warfare create a cognitive mindset that lends itself toward almost complete adherence to the prevailing knowledge structures. Therefore, it was unsurprising that General Tommy Franks automatically steered CENTCOM's military response to the Afghan conundrum toward conventional options. It would have been out of character for him or his command to suggest, as the primacy response orientation, something radically different. This has led to criticism from some quarters, especially those with a Special Operations background that Franks conventionalized an unconventional warfare situation with all the long-term deleterious consequences that it would inevitably entail concerning OEF.[76]

The choice of options that CENTCOM's planning staff and elite decision makers eventually formulated provides a fascinating glimpse

of the power of culture, knowledge structures, and dominant success models in warfare on military social action. First and foremost, it is highly revealing that CENTCOM under General Franks did not present the Bush administration with complete strategies for a successful military outcome in Afghanistan. Instead, they offered a menu of options for the use of force and none of which in themselves provided a coherent strategy for success. These have been described as boiling down to four options: option 1 was strikes by Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM); option 2 was a TLAM combination with B-2 bomber strikes; option 3 was special operations forces (SOF); and option 4 was a mixture of all three as precursor to the use of conventional ground forces.[77] What is interesting about the choices is the dominance of the air power option, in three out of four choices, that mirrors the Gulf War model of 1991[78] in which great emphasis was placed on five weeks of precursor strategic bombing using most of these technologies with the exception of the B-2A preceded a four-day ground operation. Throughout the 1990s, various loose imitations of the Gulf War model or the air power first approach, predicated largely around the air dimension, had been unsurprisingly in view of dominant knowledge structures applied on several occasions with a varying degree of success in Bosnia in 1995, in Iraq in 1998, and in Kosovo in 1999.[79] In the latter campaign, it had floundered a great deal and generated a return to strategic bombardments that targeted "the economic system" and civil structures in Belgrade with secondary military utility such as bridges across the river Danube by the fourth week (out of eleven) of the bombing campaign.[80] By the end of the campaign, the Gulf War model, which in fairness had been applied on an initially haphazard and piecemeal form with significant divisions between key commanders[81] with regard targeting strategy, raised more questions than answers about its universal applicability.

For equally pertinent reasons, the Gulf War model was highly inappropriate for application in Afghanistan. First and foremost, strategic air power had very little utility in an under-developed and rapidly declining nation-state. There was a great shortage of strategic targets, and the very basis level of existence in Afghanistan did not lend itself to strategic disruption through the use of air power. Put simply, Afghan society and, more importantly, the Taliban did not rely heavily on material structures, sophisticated command, and control facilities and modern technology that a country such as Iraq in 1991 had. It is important not to forget that Saddam Hussein had modeled on and indeed bought a significant tranche of his military equipment from Western state examples of how armed forces should be organized. This was not only an enduring legacy of colonial occupation from the British but also a result of a phenomenal arms marketing drive on behalf of the West during the Iran/Iraq war of the 1980s. In contrast, the Taliban owed its social origins not from a particular state model, but to its emergence as a non-state actor or social movement that specialized

in guerrilla/unorthodox warfare that eventually led to its triumph over the Mujahedin factions that controlled Afghanistan in the bloody aftermath of their victory over the Soviet-sponsored regime left behind by the retreating Soviet Army. Therefore, Afghanistan was highly unsuited to a standalone strategic air campaign, which would in all likelihood run out of important military targets within a matter of hours of starting. One of the great strengths of the Gulf War model was its ability to generate coercive effect over time frame measures in weeks and months so that opposing political elites could literally watch their state formations, infrastructure, and social control being eroded on a daily and often nightly basis. In Afghanistan, this level of coercive effect through the application of air power alone was simply not possible or credible.

However, for CENTCOM, the formulation of a radically new option/strategy was ideationally very unlikely in view of the key personalities and the dominant knowledge structures in place. A normative change of this magnitude would have required many years of innovation, which was a process that would have demanded certain key conditions. The first of these would be enlightened military leadership. As Rosen notes, "peacetime military innovation occurs when respected senior military officers formulate a strategy for innovation, which has both intellectual and organizational components."[82] There is no evidence under the direction of General Tommy Franks and his particular style of management, notwithstanding the mitigating factor of his relatively short tenure of office prior to 9/11, that such an innovative environment could have been created. Additionally, the slavish adherence to presenting options rather than strategies due to his willingness to relinquish military strategic leadership for operational control of fighting reduced the scope for meaningful change at the higher level of directing operations. Taken together and enfolded with the organizational climate of CENTCOM and the innate parochial interests of the three services, who were providing the key forces, for a conventional response, it is hard to see how an alternative approach to fighting in Afghanistan could have been effectively formulated.

Nevertheless, the problems that would beset the implementation and indeed translation of conventional operations to overcome the Afghan conundrum would provoke systemic problems through CENTCOM, wider military elites, and political elites in the United States. It would generate a skewed and halting campaign and one that was prosecuted in the full glare of the worldwide media. It was an operation under perhaps unprecedented and intense domestic and international scrutiny in the aftermath of the global publicity generated by the September 11 attacks. These factors created a mix of internal and external pressures and influences across various military institutions, civilian and intelligence agencies, and key political communities, largely in conflict that would dog the first weeks of the campaign. All of these problems would be fought out while attempting

to conduct limited coalition warfare as well with all the diplomatic and military implications of fighting with partners. The resolution of these issues, not solely on the battlefield but in the United States itself among political and military elites, would hold the key to long-term and short-term success or failure in the rugged mountainous terrain of Afghanistan.

Questions

1. Was 9/11 an act of terror or an act of war?
2. Assess whether the declaration of a "War on Terror" was a judicious and appropriate response to the threat posed by Al Qaeda to the United States in 2001.
3. What are the merits and dangers of using military forces to combat terrorists?
4. Do we need separate services in the form of armies, navies, and air forces when a joint armed force would be a more efficient use of resources? Discuss.
5. Do military commands or any form of military organization exhibit long-standing preferences for the application of force in military campaigns?

Notes

1 Bruce Hoffman, "Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 25, no. 5 (2002): 304.
2 Fred Kaplan, *Daydream Believers: How a Few Grand Ideas Wrecked American Power* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2008) (Kindle Edition).
3 George Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Virgin Books, 2010), 128 (Kindle Edition).
4 *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004), 330.
5 Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 342 (Kindle Edition).
6 Peter Paret and Michael Howard, eds and trans., *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 79.
7 Bush, *Decision Points*, 136 (Kindle Edition).
8 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 337 (Kindle Edition).
9 Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
10 Bush, *Decision Points*, 126 (Kindle Edition).
11 Ibid., 130 (Kindle Edition).
12 Rice, *No Higher Honour* (Kindle Edition).
13 Bush, *Decision Points*, 137–138 (Kindle Edition).

14 *The Military Balance 2011* (London: Routledge, 2011), 56.
15 See Martin Hammond, trans., *Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War* (Oxford: OUP, 2009).
16 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 352 (Kindle Edition).
17 Ibid., 352–353 (Kindle Edition).
18 See Michael Howard, "A Long War?" *Survival*, 48, no. 4 (Winter 2006/ 2007): 8.
19 See Rice, *No Higher Honour* (Kindle Edition). Dr Rice wondered whether the Bush administration "somehow missed an opportunity to make the declaration of Article V have meaning for the Alliance."
20 See Alastair Finlan, Philip Grove, and Mark Grove, *The Second World War: The War at Sea* (Oxford: Osprey, 2002), 82.
21 See Alastair Finlan, *Special Forces, Strategy and the War on Terror: Warfare by Other Means* (London: Routledge, 2008) for a discussion of Special Forces in the counterterrorism role.
22 Susan Marquis provides a very good insight into the problems facing Special Operations Forces and the relationship with conventional forces in the United States. See Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Forces* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1997).
23 Sinisa Malesevic, *The Sociology of War and Violence* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 127.
24 See Central Command's website, "U.S. Central Command History." Accessed May 28, 2012. http://www.centcom.mil.
25 Michael DeLong with Noah Lukeman, *Inside CentCom: The Unvarnished Truth about the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2004), 5.
26 See Alastair Finlan, *The Gulf War 1991* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003) for a brief introduction to this campaign.
27 Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 314.
28 See Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Forces*, 94–95.
29 DeLong, *Inside CentCom*, 7.
30 Ibid.
31 See H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1998), 13.
32 This position was strengthened again in 1986—see Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 312.
33 Andrew Cockburn, *Rumsfeld: An American Disaster* (London: Verso, 2007), 108.
34 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 293–294 (Kindle Edition).
35 Ibid., 332–333 (Kindle Edition).
36 Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road From 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 252.
37 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 291 (Kindle Edition).
38 See Irving L. Janis, *GroupThink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982).

39 See H. Norman Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero* (London: Bantam Books, 1993).
40 CSIS Report, *American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century* (Washington: CSIS, 2000), xviii.
41 Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 246–247.
42 DeLong, *Inside CentCom*, 8.
43 See Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 33–34.
44 Ibid., 49.
45 Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero*, 65–67.
46 Franks, *American Soldier*, 232.
47 Ibid., 134.
48 Ibid., 530.
49 Ibid., 531.
50 Kaplan, *Daydream Believers* (Kindle Edition).
51 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 369 (Kindle Edition).
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.; see also Bush, *Decision Points*, 194 (Kindle Edition).
54 Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 89.
55 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 243 (Kindle Edition).
56 Ibid., 250 (Kindle Edition).
57 Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: The Free Press, 1960), 21.
58 Richard B. Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr, "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model." *International Security*, 30, no. 3 (Winter 2005/ 2006): 124–160.
59 The author falls into this camp – see Finlan, *Special Forces, Strategy and the War on Terror*, 111–138.
60 Lester Grau, *The Bear Went over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), xix.
61 Stuart Tootal, *Danger Close* (London: John Murray, 2009), 23.
62 Ibid.
63 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 370 (Kindle Edition).
64 Ibid.
65 Deborah Avant, "Political Institutions and Military Effectiveness: Contemporary United States and United Kingdom" in *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness,* eds Risa A. Brooks and Elizabeth A. Stanley (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 84.
66 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), 181.
67 Stephen P. Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 9.
68 Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 186.
69 Franks, *American Soldier*, 61.

70 Using ideology in the same way as Jack Snyder, see *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 30–31.
71 Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 161–162.
72 Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, trans., Edmund Jephcott (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2006), 47.
73 Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (London: Penguin, 1961), 11.
74 DeLong, *Inside CentCom*, 6.
75 Ibid., 49.
76 Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 4.
77 Franks, *American Soldier*, 258–261.
78 Finlan, *Special Forces, Strategy and the War on Terror*, 118.
79 Ibid.
80 See Scott A. Cooper, "The Politics of Air Strikes" in *Immaculate Warfare: Participants Reflect on the Air Campaigns over Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq*, ed. Stephen D. Wrage (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 80 (Kindle Edition).
81 Ibid.
82 Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, 21.

CHAPTER THREE

Operation Enduring Freedom

The revolution in military affairs (RMA) encompasses a strategic discourse stemming from the late twentieth century about the potential of the information technology (IT) revolution with enhanced precision weapons on the future of warfare.

The breathtaking speed and initial success of the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan in 2001 has generated an abundance of speculation, intellectual inquiry, and debate in military circles as to what created this extraordinary example of military effectiveness. Increasingly, much of the focus takes as its starting point the end result of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): the destruction of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the scattering of the Al Qaeda network in approximately two months. A fearsome theater of operations and traditionally the death zone for so many previous invaders had been overwhelmed by American savvy and technological prowess in very short order. As such, the term "model," a label reserved for examples of military excellence, has begun to find traction in the intellectual debates about OEF.[1] In contrast, however, a process-based analysis of OEF taking a focus on the institutions and personalities involved in the campaign presents a very different interpretation of the so-called Afghan model. As opposed to outcome-based analysis, such an approach reveals that strategic paralysis dominated US grand and operational strategy for much of initial-to-mid phases of operations. In addition, a fractured command relationship between political and military elites in the United States contributed heavily to the overall lack of direction. This highly dysfunctional situation allowed other nonmilitary agencies, especially the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to take the lead in creating and shaping effective political and military action

on the ground in Afghanistan. The apparently successful military campaign by December 2001 was largely the result of various ad hoc processes that fortuitously came together at just the right time. Nobody was more surprised about the fall of the Taliban in December 2001 than the command staff at Central Command (CENTCOM) that had predicted "the decisive phase of combat wouldn't take place until the following summer, the earliest time when two armored divisions could be mobilized for combat."[2]

The Afghan puzzle

OEF is not only a puzzle in military affairs that fits nicely with cultural interpretations in the study of international relations and ones that "fill in the gap of explanation,"[3] it also poses a fundamental challenge to strategic theory as well. In a nutshell, it defies traditional explanations for the use of force in international relations because it does not conform to rational choice theory in the sense that the United States did not attempt to adopt a maximalist position from the outset in terms of the application of military power in Afghanistan. Even more perplexing, the US military did not immediately empower their innate cultural preferences for waging warfare against the armed forces of another state. In a material sense, the campaign did not witness the employment of large-scale conventional forces, massive amounts of military hardware on the ground, or, apart from in a limited sense, the application of dominant strategies and concepts to destroy the Taliban regime. From this perspective, OEF is not just an unusual campaign – it was an exceptional one. Together, these anomalies suggest three likely options: the system was, in some way, broken or, in other words, the US military was not allowed to wage its preferred "way" of warfare. This explanation would suggest that chosen military options in OEF were the result of a stymied decision-making process/environment, best described as a form of strategic paralysis and one that enabled radically different preferences to be empowered in theater. Alternatively, had a fundamental shift occurred virtually overnight in the social and ideational realm of military decision making in the United States? In other words, powerful elites at the highest levels of government consciously adopted counter-cultural options for the implementation of military forces under the auspices of OEF. This would indicate some form of instant revolutionary transformation of military structures and ideas. A final explanation is that the emergence of the Afghan model was an accident.[4]

Exploring the strategic paralysis explanation

All three individual services in the United States possess recognizable and identifiable preferences for fighting warfare, yet none of these options,

which had proven themselves to be effective in wars gone by, were put into full-blooded effect in Afghanistan. This is not to deny that a choice of options or a selective application of institutional preferences can and does occur, but the surprising aspect of OEF was the virtual absence at the root of US strategy of the foundational preferences of three institutions, even if just acting as building blocks for force generation. This would be manifested, to take the US Army as an example, in the deployment of some artillery, some mechanized infantry, and some armor formations; however, this simply did not occur in 2001 at all.

US preferences for warfighting by institution

The US Army	The US Navy/Marines	The US Air Force
All arms warfare	Full spectrum warfare	Strategic attack
Large armored formations	Aircraft carriers	Tactical bombers
Mechanized infantry (tanks/APCS)	Submarines	Strike aircraft
Artillery (massed)	Amphibious assault	Close air support
Air assault forces (helicopters)	MEF on the ground	Expeditionary
Massive firepower	TLAM	Air power[5]

A rough analysis of the preferences of the three US military institutions indicates that none of the US Army's preferences were empowered in the campaign. This was a path-breaking situation given the traditional closeness of the US Army in relation to political elites in America. This can only suggest that these preferences/the mechanisms for implementing them were disabled, blocked, or delayed. For the US Navy, with the caveat that Afghanistan was a landlocked country,[6] it was not the natural choice for a maritime component in view of the need for host nation support (HNS) for overflight permission for naval strike aircraft;[7] however, only two partial preferences were visible: a small deployment of Marines at Camp Rhino (not the usual deployment order)[8] and the use of Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) cruise missiles. For the US Air Force, the situation was better with more preferences empowered, but the nature of the opposition/environment restricted many of them such as strike aircraft attacks and close air support until substantial HNS was established with suitable air fields/bases. A purely material analysis of OEF in terms of preferences empowered reveals that very few of the most important and historically successful predilections toward the application of military force by the

military institutions of the United States were put into effect. It was, and remains, a puzzling response from a cultural analysis perspective.

The failure to apply traditional warfighting preferences was a highly surprising situation in view of the strategic context: America had been attacked and thousands of its citizens were killed outright. There had never been, since Pearl Harbor in 1941, a more conducive strategic environment for the US military establishment to apply its might with strong national and international support and justification for doing so. Yet this obvious and seemingly natural policy option was never taken. In addition, the power differentials between the United States and Afghanistan, a semi-failed state, were so vast that the application of just a fraction of its conventional strength would be enough to generate victory on the ground. The danger of mirroring the apparent failure of the Soviet Army in the 1980s was very remote in view of the strategic conditions on the ground in Afghanistan: a disillusioned population with the Taliban regime, widespread poverty, and a crumbling social and material infrastructure on the ground. This was not 1979 and any informed strategic analysis would have recognized the new state of affairs. Facts had changed on the ground since the late 1980s when the Soviets eventually withdrew. However, many of the senior policy makers such as Rumsfeld, Powell, Rice and Franks in the US administration had worked during and spent their careers in the military and in government while the US covert war against the Soviets in Afghanistan was taking place. To what extent the groupthink at the highest levels of government was skewed by past perceptions or even inapt assumptions or studies for the present context about the outcome of the Soviet campaign remains a moot point.[9]

Regardless of potential causal factors in the background of overall decision making, it begs the question of why was the initial US military response so unfocused and ineffective. A process-based analysis draws attention to the influence of critical top-level decision-making structures in the US government and the role of key leaders in pushing for certain solutions. With regard to OEF, there was clearly a significant amount of friction being generated by bureaucratic politics between civilian and military elites as well as within the interfaces of the different services. At the highest level of decision making, the United States possessed a president or supreme manager of the state who was content to rely heavily on the expertise of others and this played an important part in the paucity of hands-on strategic leadership at the top. A brief investigation of George W. Bush's career path to power reveals a great deal about his leadership and personal qualities. An insightful portrayal of him is provided by his former Counterterrorism Chief, Richard Clarke, who suggested, "it was clear that the critique of him as a dumb, lazy rich kid were somewhat off the mark. When he focused, he asked the kind of questions that revealed a results-orientated mind, but he looked for the simple solution."[10] George Bush's

background shows a man whose experience of military affairs was limited, notwithstanding that early in his career after college, his exposure to the armed services had the potential for great benefit later in his life. First, unlike his father who volunteered for active service[11] and became a combat naval aviator in World War II,[12] George Bush was on the sidelines of the Vietnam War as a member of the Texas Air National Guard and did not experience the rigors of combat. Bush recalls of his time in the US military that "serving as a Guard pilot appealed to me. I would learn a new skill. If called, I would fly in combat. If not, I would have flexibility to do other things."[13] Indeed, the very fact that he did not volunteer for active service exudes a notable degree of passivity and indicates either a low professional drive as a reserve military officer or a general lack of interest in acquiring prestige, status, or simply wanting to experience the challenge of putting his training into practice. Combat experience is the hallmark/ambition of any professional air officer, yet George Bush consciously chose not to take his opportunity in the Vietnam War. Interestingly, his Vice President, Dick Cheney, adopted a similar line of argument when explaining why he avoided the draft and serving in the US military during the same conflict. His memoirs admit, "I had received deferments as a student and father. Earlier, when I was doing line work, I had been classified 1-A, but the draft numbers were low and I wasn't called. If I had been, I would have been happy to serve."[14] As a consequence, neither of the two most powerful political leaders in the United States had personal experience in warfare. For President Bush, after his time in the National Guard, he moved into a series of ventures within the oil industry and part owning a baseball team until moving into politics and becoming elected as the governor of Texas in 1994.[15] Subsequently, a disputed election in 2000 propelled him into a position of unprecedented power.

Dysfunctional political elite mechanisms

The chronic shortage of military experience and leadership shortcomings in the presidential office placed more onus on the US cabinet and key departments of state to construct a viable and workable grand strategy to deal with the Afghan conundrum. However, the top organs of state were divided as to an appropriate response that translated into policy and strategic disarray at the highest levels. The most powerful of these executive branches was the Department of Defense that suffered from a fractious leadership cadre with a peculiar strategic agenda that was out of sync at times with the immediate reality. Instead of focusing on the issue in hand or the threat posed by Al Qaeda and responding to 9/11, the political elites of the Defense Department represented by Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, pursued a conflicting strategic goal. This has been

revealed by a top insider in the US administration, heavily involved in the policy response to 9/11, the day after the attacks, that the "DOD's focus was already beginning to shift from al Qaeda. CIA was explicit now that al Qaeda was guilty of the attacks, but Paul Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld's deputy, was not persuaded. [. . .] Iraq must have been helping them."[16] This incident when Wolfowitz brought up the Iraq link has been well documented, though new evidence suggests that the Iraq connection was not received well by President Bush during the planning session. Condoleezza Rice notes of this comment that she "overheard the President tell Andy Card to call Paul aside and tell him not to interject in that way again."[17]

The obsession with Iraq by Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz was apparent prior to their involvement in the Bush administration. Both were part of the *Project for a New American Century* that was a radical neoconservative (neocon) grouping with strong ties to Israel that was their model state for the Middle East region in general[18] and held the view that the United States should have finished the job in the Gulf War of 1991 and removed Saddam from office in the form of regime change. The fixation on Iraq, which was Israel's most formidable near foe, led to a mapping of that minor country's security agenda progressively onto that of the most important global world actor, the United States after 9/11 through the influence of the neocons in the Bush administration. The inherent problem of this process was the gradual, and eventually fundamental, distraction away from the main focus of the US response to 9/11 or Osama Bin Laden and the Al Qaeda group. The separation of aims at the highest levels of political decision making was compounded by the Rumsfeld factor. Donald Rumsfeld has been widely documented as a mercurial and quite perplexing manager who generated, wittingly or unwittingly, tense relationships with military colleagues and others within and outside his department. Taken together, this did not engender a unified and positive senior command climate. The quite natural and desirable division of power between civil and military authorities in the United States meant that Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense exercised supreme and completely autocratic power over the military. In a functional sense, his position was answerable to the president, but in the absence of strong direction from his "line manager" it meant that his department was effectively his own fiefdom until removed from office. It represented a vast accumulation of political and military power in the hands of just one person, and in the event of the appointment of an individual whose actions and ideas were out of kilter with the mainstream, the scope for latitude was potentially vast. It is now quite clear that the Rumsfeld factor was a source of disharmony, not only within his department, but also with other heads of department in equally important organs of state at a critical moment of crisis for the United States. Until recently, the levels of disruption have not been quantified outside the circle of Washington insiders whose periodic revelations (once out of office) have hinted at significant problems.[19]

Colin Powell has recently revealed, "We got rid of the horrific Hussein and Taliban regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the residual problems in those countries exposed deep fissures within the national security team" and would later describe it by 2004 as "dysfunctional."[20]

The leadership of the Defense Department was clearly a significant part of the problem, but a failure by the National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, to generate or enforce on a permanent basis harmony at the executive levels or even for the president to intervene decisively in the situation was indicative of a shortage of strong direction and strategic leadership. Donald Rumsfeld provides an interesting perspective on her management style, especially her "commitment, whenever possible, to 'bridging' differences between the agencies, rather than bringing those differences to the President for decisions."[21] The Secretary of Defense's perspective was well known to Condoleezza Rice who explains that "he complained that I kept seeking consensus when the President should have been given a decision memo – so that he could just decide [. . .] Often, though, it is preferable for the national security advisor to deliver the news that a Cabinet secretary has been overruled than to have the President do it."[22] Rice's memoirs provides a fascinating insight of the challenges facing her office when dealing with very powerful yet divided figures with long experience in the corridors of power in Washington. Rumsfeld and Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, while having a "personal respect" for each other, had "an equal measure of distrust."[23] The Office of the Vice President was another variable of conflict to be managed for "the Vice President's staff, which seemed very much of one ultra-hawkish mind, was determined to act as a power center of its own."[24] The stresses of trying to coordinate very strong-minded executives of key departments pulling in different directions with the end result of being a less than joined-up approach at the height of the campaign have also been noted by other analysts of the unusual US foreign policy at this stage.[25] Ultimately, however, the failure to take charge of the situation and ensure that disruptive personalities were brought under control and coordinated tightly was a failure of the presidential office.

At the policy level, such a bifurcation of US aims in the now declared "War on Terror" was a recipe for a dilution of effort, confusion about policy objectives, and a woolly, if not nonexistent, grand strategy in the absence of strong and clear presidential direction. Put simply, it was seeking a victory without higher political direction that in bald terms is a formula for eventual strategic defeat because as Clausewitz reminds us, "war is merely the continuation of policy [politics] by other means."[26] By unwittingly decoupling political aims as a result of their absence from military objectives, Bush and his senior defense officials were laying the groundwork for strategic indecision in the Afghan theater through mismanagement and distracted attention. As such, the skewed focus of senior political elites in the Department of Defense with regard to responding to the specific threat

from Al Qaeda in the context of the parameters of the Afghanistan theater of operations inevitably placed greater reliance on military commanders and the operational dimension to achieve a strategic outcome.

This situation was worsened somewhat by the informal hierarchy of influence within the Bush administration with the Department of Defense enjoying a greater influence than the Department of State under Colin Powell, which was responsible for foreign affairs. The relationship between defense and foreign policy reached such a nadir that the lack of coordination between them started to become apparent to allies. On October 24, 2001, this was recorded in Tony Blair's trusted spin-doctor's diaries of "conflicting signals coming out of the different bits of government" and the "lack of a clear military plan"[27] was now apparent in the US administration. This view of a disintegration of relations between core parts of the US government was also recorded by the Commander in Chief of the British Army, General Sir Mike Jackson, who notes in his memoirs that, "while Powell was Secretary of State there was a running battle between the State Department and the Pentagon."[28] The seeming breakdown of the relationship between State and Defense departments in the United States at the critical phase of operations in Afghanistan reflects an extraordinary collapse of cohesive collective action in the executive offices of President Bush. It also explains why US grand strategy was virtually nonexistent at the critical formative stages of OEF and later. If foreign and defense policy was not coordinated and the shortage of direct communication between the two departments certainly did not help, then US overall strategy in Afghanistan would have been seriously rudderless in a directional sense at formative stages of planning or nonplanning. The lack of coordination would have inevitably placed greater weight on unitary policies of individual departments such as the State Department's preferred foreign policy and the operational commander's military strategy to achieve political/military outcomes that demanded joint unified visions.

The failure of the most powerful organs of the United States to work together exacerbated a critical aspect of the military/political planning process and one that needed an urgent decision before the campaign could really be initiated: what was the United States' desired political/military aim with regard the Taliban regime in Afghanistan? The nub of the issue was what was the relationship between the Taliban and Al Qaeda and could one be separated from the other without incurring the costs of regime change? The rollback of the Russians and their most recent experience in Afghanistan were prominent in the minds of policy makers as a negative influence as to the sort of options that the United States did not want to take in Afghanistan. This is revealed by Tommy Franks during the initial planning stages of OEF when he observed, "the implicit lesson of Afghanistan's recent history was not to put large numbers of American troops on the ground to accomplish the mission – unless absolutely

necessary."[29] It begs the question of whether the elite decision makers were drawing the wrong lessons of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan. The initial takeover of Afghanistan or the removal of the old regime was a textbook example, a model of how to conduct regime change swiftly and decisively. However, US analysis appeared to focus on the outcome of the Soviet adventure that took a decade to occur and certain interpretations of their failure.[30] Regardless of which, narrow interpretations and fixed ideas of past failures appeared to dominate the US military decision-making mindset which closed off other more natural options such as putting large amounts of conventional troops and firepower on the ground.

This was one of the most interesting facets of OEF that has been largely ignored by proponents of the Afghan model that fundamental regime change initially was not on the cards at all in the first weeks of the campaign. In others words, overall policy was not fixed around this aim, but instead was gravitating toward a less radical outcome. Much of this moderation was due in large part to an uncertainty on behalf of American political elites as to what sort of political situation they wanted to effect in Afghanistan. It was this lack of clarity of vision concerning the key aim around which military policy would ideally be constructed and working toward that aim that generated a palpable sense of hesitancy about US actions in theater. The eventual "on the job" approach because the word "plan" perhaps suggests a degree of coherence that is difficult to detect is neatly summarized by Hy Rothstein who argues that "the United States aimed to pressure and weaken the Taliban through a combination of air attacks, special operations, and limited support to the Northern Alliance. The United States hoped to induce a split in the Taliban by killing off the most dogmatic elements of the movement."[31] In some respects, this more moderate aim, while lending support to the notion of not putting vast amounts of heavy conventional forces on the ground with all the potential awkward casualty consequences, helped to generate operational indecision. A constrained military effort would inevitably take time to generate, if at all, the appropriate strategic effect on the Taliban regime and, under the spotlight of the global media, it would draw unwelcome attention to the efficacy of the US effort in the short term. More importantly, it generated a notion that a grand strategy was in existence when, in fact, it merely highlighted the higher-level political confusion as to what was the US grand strategy trying to achieve and how quickly. Instant or "lightning or Blitzkrieg" campaigns, as history demonstrated (World War II and the Six Day War in 1967 for example), required massive amounts of conventional forces with a preponderance of land forces. The United States was trying to achieve the same result with a fraction of the forces with the balance of the units shifted in favor of air power to the detriment of people on the ground. To a degree, they were trying to overturn long-held maxims about warfare that only boots in theater could seize and hold territory and with

that outcome generate significant political effects. Air power, though often promising much over the years, had never been able to achieve the same strategic effects as an invading/occupying land power.

Another potential impetus for why the United States was reluctant to commit massive amounts of conventional firepower on the ground was the risk of generating casualties. This issue, at the heart of Martin Shaw's concept of the "New Western Way of Warfare,"[32] had haunted US administrations since the disastrous Vietnam War of the 1960s/70s in which 58,000 Americans had died. In historical terms, this was a "moderate" cost from a purely numbers perspective in view of the 400,000 killed in World War II (to take just one relatively modern example), but it was the notion that America's societal perceptions toward casualties had changed. As Shaw notes, "the problem was that the war had not been successfully isolated as a military struggle. Instead it had permeated politics and society, with profound, destabilizing consequences."[33] One of the most characteristic features of the Vietnam War was the manifestation of civil disobedience, disorder, and outright opposition to the campaign and mounting human costs that strongly influenced the political decision to withdraw without achieving unconditional victory and represented the first major loss in US memory. In the 1990s, this casualty sensitivity raised its head among the political elites with the infamous Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia in 1993. While there is no evidence that the US public would not have sustained more casualties in Somalia other than the 18 elite troops killed and, in some cases, their bodies paraded on global television networks, the Clinton administration unilaterally took the decision to withdraw.[34] By 2001, there was still perhaps an excessive over-sensitization among military and political circles about the impact of dead Americans on public opinion. Again, this was overreaction to the actual context of the time: in times of perceived national emergency, societies are generally much more tolerant of casualties so once more military planning was being constrained by perceived, not actual, limitations. It begs the question of why elite decision makers were not in tune with the situation in hand.[35]

The CIA leads the way

The disarray among political elite decision makers and institutions in the United States as to how best to respond to 9/11 opened up a strategic vacuum that enabled other less high profile and more shadowy organs of state to lead the way. This could be interpreted as a product of competitive forces between different organizations of state to steer the US response to 9/11; however, an equally valid explanation was that the CIA was better led and organized to fashion a sensible policy reaction. Unlike both Defense and State Departments, the CIA was directed by the same leadership that had served

under President Clinton and so enjoyed considerably more continuity and stability under the direction of George Tenet than the tension-riven Defense Department under Donald Rumsfeld. In this light, it was hardly surprising that while the Presidential executive office, Defense and State Departments, displayed a lack of high-level cohesion, harmony, and direction in tackling the response to 9/11, the CIA displayed an impressive grasp of the situation and understanding at all levels of how to tackle the threat from Al Qaeda. Quite quickly in the aftermath of the collapse of the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the CIA had quickly zeroed in on Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network as being the main suspects. Unlike the Defense Department, elite decision makers were not permeated by biased and somewhat unhinged neoconservative counter-agendas with a distracting focus on Iraq. Under the leadership of George Tenet, the CIA's Counter Terrorism Center under the direction of Cofer Black, the CIA quickly marshaled its best and most qualified field officers to go after Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. One of the key figures in this remarkably swift and joined-up reaction was Gary Schroen, a CIA officer with an expertise in Afghanistan who offers a penetrating insight into the thinking of the CIA's leadership, especially Cofer Black, the head of the Counterterrorism Centre, during an initial meeting on September 14:

> Gary, I want you to take a small team of CIA officers into Afghanistan. You will link up with the Northern Alliance in the Panjshir Valley, and your job is to convince them to cooperate fully with the CIA and the U.S. military as we go after Bin Ladin and the al-Qa'ida. You will also evaluate their military capabilities and recommend steps we can take to bring the Northern Alliance forces to a state of readiness so they can effectively take on the Taliban forces, opening the way for our efforts against UBL.[36]

The clarity of vision and direction just a few days after September 11 reflects a mature organization that was confident in itself and its personnel. The choice of a 59-year-old field officer, on the verge of retirement, displayed an enlightened concept of leadership and that picking the right person with experience for the job, regardless of circumstances, was more important than choosing a less experienced younger person. Furthermore, the unambiguous aim of the mission showed that the senior management of the CIA was very clear as to what they wanted to achieve in directing operations in Afghanistan. The simplicity of Schroen's mission plan and the uncomplicated unity of action between the highest strategic levels of the CIA and operational action on the ground in the theater of Afghanistan was a model of effective direction of activities within an organization of state toward a single aim. In this respect, the sheer competence and cohesion of the CIA's response to 9/11 elevated them in terms of credibility and actual visible effect above all other options available to the president.

One of the most interesting aspects of the pre-planning for the insertion of Schroen's team codenamed "Jawbreaker" was the failure to get a member of the US Special Operations (SpecOps) community to join them. This was in many respects a "natural"[37] partnership with the CIA and US Special Forces possessing an intimate and extremely fruitful relationship over time that had witnessed some very successful operations in diverse theaters of operations from Asia to Europe and Central America from the 1950s onwards and extending well into the 1980s. Indeed, many of Schroen's Jawbreaker team members were former members of US SpecOps community[38] and this cross-recruiting pattern had been in existence for decades, largely as a result, not only of a convergence of activities (since the 1950s Special Forces and CIA have often worked clandestinely together) but also due to a shared history. Many of the early founders of the CIA in the late 1940s and US Special Forces in the early 1950s had served together in the wartime Office for Strategic Services (OSS).[39] Nevertheless, this long-standing relationship broke down at the critical pre-deployment planning stage largely due to uncertainty among the military as to what their role would be. Schroen recalls the problems of trying to get SpecOps involved because "the bottom line was that no SpecOps personnel would accompany JAWBREAKER into Afghanistan. The official reason given was that without SAR [Search and Rescue] capability, the mission was considered 'too dangerous'."[40] This was an extraordinary state of affairs when US Special Forces considered a behind the lines mission that the civilians of the CIA were prepared to undertake as being too risky. Perhaps never in the history of the units had such a situation ever emerged, not during World War II when Special Forces and intelligence agents worked behind Nazi lines in occupied France or even during the Cold War when again, Special Forces and the CIA operated behind the Iron Curtain on occasions. This was quite a bizarre situation in view of the sheer numbers of available SpecOps Forces assets available, from the highly secretive Delta Force[41] to the equally effective Green Berets. The unwillingness to participate suggests that traditional mechanisms for cooperation between the CIA and the US military had either failed to work or were being actively blocked for some reason. Whatever the case, it meant that the CIA were first into action when the team deployed via a CIA-owned Russian-built helicopter[42] and touched the ground in Afghanistan at 2.45 p.m. on September 26, 2001.[43]

The CIA's strategy in Afghanistan

The challenges posed by the CIA's mission in Afghanistan were extensive and demanded a multi-faceted approach on the ground in order to facilitate the higher strategic aims of the agency. First and foremost, contact needed

to be refreshed with the key warlords and leaders of the Northern Alliance. These relationships had dwindled in the bloody aftermath of the Soviet retreat; however, contact had remained open, though with little material support to the former Mujahedin who fought against the Pakistani-aided Taliban that eventually took over the country and this was to prove vital when the Jawbreaker team was inserted.[44] Second, those initial contacts needed to be solidified into a firmer military alliance in which all sides would fight toward a common aim. This was the nub of the problem: how to, in a very short space of time, convert a relatively disorganized group of fighters who were clearly losing the long-term campaign against the Taliban into a far more effective force that could, with US assistance, change the strategic balance of power in the country. Money was a vital component in creating a favorable situation on the ground in Afghanistan. It proved to be an incredibly effective means of getting large bodies of people and indeed an entire movement (the Northern Alliance) on to the US side and gaining their cooperation quickly. The Jawbreaker team alone took in a very substantial amount of money just to generate the right so negotiating environment from the outset. As the leader of Jawbreaker recalls that he "took charge of three cardboard boxes containing $3 million. The money was in hundred-dollar bills, all used and none in sequence, and packaged in bundles of $10,000. Ten of those bundles were plastic wrapped into bricks of $100,000 each. Ten bricks were packed in each box."[45] This was in many respects a down payment to open up negotiations, and the cost of ensuring Northern Alliance support with the help of US Special Operations Forces (SOF) in just the northern part of Afghanistan was $5 million according to Tommy Franks who personally closed this specific deal on the negotiations in Tajikistan.[46] To a large degree, the fact that the CIA were the first on the ground in Afghanistan and also the main point of contact between the indigenous forces and the Americans gave them an elevated and unanticipated degree of influence on the overall direction of US strategy. Their insights and sheer location deep at the heart of the operational environment meant that the Jawbreaker team became a hub in an ideational and material sense through which US policy and ultimately strategy formulation was being applied in northern Afghanistan. The initial assessments of the Jawbreaker team provided the impetus for the deployment of US Special Forces[47] and they were also the welcoming committee for many of the Green Berets when they deployed for the first time in to Afghanistan by helicopters.[48] But, in addition, Jawbreaker had already worked out how US Special Forces could be best applied with the Northern Alliance, especially in terms of using laser designators to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of US air power.[49] Tim Ripley draws attention to the role played by CIA officer, Hank Crumpton, as the "driving force behind the US campaign"[50] and how the CIA's plan "stressed that the US air campaign needed to be highly focused."[51] Certainly, the fusion of CIA

and Special Forces on the ground armed with coordinating technology with US air power offered extraordinarily precision attack options for military commanders based in the United States.

Parallel warfare is the ability to attack strategic targets across numerous levels of significance simultaneously as opposed to sequential warfare that traditionally attacked and destroyed one level only before moving onto another.

Crisis of US military command and strategy

The US military's response to the challenge posed by the Afghan conundrum was at best hesitant, lacking direction and confidence in the first weeks of operations. To a very significant degree, it drew upon the highly successful Gulf War I model of operations with an emphasis in the initial campaign on air power. Hostilities in OEF formally opened with a very limited aerial assault on October 7, 2001 with just 31 targets in Afghanistan hit on the first night of operations.[52] The range of air assets used, however, was very impressive from B-2A Stealth Bombers, B-1b and B-52 (Vietnam era) strategic bombers, various strike aircraft, especially naval, and 50 Tomahawk missiles fired from ships[53] and submarines. The problem for the air campaign, which began to appear to falter after a few weeks of dropping ordnance on Afghanistan, was that it was producing very little effect on the enemy. As Hy Rothstein records,

> For the Bush administration, the darkest moments of the war came between its third and fifth week. Indications of the apparent troubles on the battlefield was obvious in press coverage, as indicated in the following article titles:
>
> "Taliban Hang On; US Finds They Are Not So Easy to Defeat" (*Newsday*, October 26);
>
> "Big Ground Forces Seen as Necessary to Defeat Taliban; Bombing Has Left Militia Largely Intact" (*Washington Post*, November);
>
> "The Week It All Went Wobbly for the West" (*Sunday Times*, London, 4 November, 2); and
>
> "U.S. Adjusts Battle Plans as Strategy Goes Awry" (*New York Times*, November 9).[54]

The critical problem for General Tommy Franks and CENTCOM was that their strategy was out of sync with the strategic realities on the ground in Afghanistan. Previous "standoff" models of warfare that had proved to be

so successful in the past would simply not work against the Taliban because they possessed no strategic targets of worth, no critical infrastructure so beloved of Western military notions of centers of gravity, or, for that matter, any sense of investment in their society including its citizens. Counter-modern movements like the Taliban in the final analysis did not have any suitable "bomb worthy" material assets that fitted the bulk of the focus of the Gulf War I model. The absence of a "script" for making war in Afghanistan was also a significant part of the problem. Nobody had done a carefully considered study of the operational problems facing conducting warfare in Afghanistan without the background pressures of time urgency and pressure from political masters for quick results that were apparent in September 2001. There was nothing in an ideational sense that Franks and his planning team could turn to for inspiration about what would work in the unique theater of operations facing them. Instead, they focused on the obvious or the last major war in Afghanistan and, sadly, misinterpreted the lessons of Soviet history in Afghanistan. The focus of the American effort was misdirected toward inapposite military options that would not generate a successful strategic outcome. To what extent early planning for military operations in Afghanistan was also unduly influenced by the military backgrounds of the key personnel and the military culture/experiences that they were steeped in remains a moot point. Franks was a conventional officer through and through who had fought in the Gulf War of 1991 so the adoption of a conventional military solution was unsurprising. More significantly, his J-3 or Operations Officer, Major General Gene Renuart, was an air force officer and as the man in charge of military planning, it is again no surprise that the air component should have such an important weight lent to it.[55]

The command structure of CENTCOM also did not engender itself toward allowing key commanders to grasp a closer appreciation of the situation or, for that matter, to generate harmony among decision makers. General Franks, unlike one of his predecessors in CENTCOM who commanded during a conflict, General Schwarzkopf was not allowed to run the campaign closer to the theater of operations. Instead, he was forced to direct activities via video link from his main headquarters in Tampa in the United States. Some have ascribed this very unusual command setup to political elites in Washington who did not desire a very visible Schwarzkopf-type commander in theater.[56] If correct, these political constraints deliberately kept a key commander away from his operational battlespace that was a highly undesirable situation from a military viewpoint. All great military commanders throughout modern history and indeed ancient history had a relatively close proximity to or were, at the very least, in the theater of operations. One of the consequences of this unusual state of affairs was that the scope for misinterpretation or inadvertent disagreement between component commanders was much

higher. A good example of this was on the first night of operations when friction developed between Franks, Washington (Rumsfeld), and the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) in Saudi Arabia. The source of tension was Soviet era aircraft based at a Taliban airfield. The head of CAOC, air component commander Lieutenant General Charles Wald, ordered the airfield to be rendered inoperable so that the aircraft could not take off thereby achieving the objective, but Rumsfeld monitoring activities via satellite technologies wanted them destroyed and this led to pressure being applied on Franks to achieve this. Had the component commander and Franks been located together, it would have been made clear that the Secretary of Defense wanted the aircraft destroyed from the outset without the need for anxious communications and restrike.[57] Technology can help to compress time and space with regard to the running of a military operation, but human agency remains at the core of equation. People communicate across a multi-spectral range of activities of which the verbal is just one mechanism. Inflections, expressive body language, mannerisms, gestures, facial expressions all add emphasis in communication that simply cannot be conveyed to the same extent by video link as opposed to face to face. Additionally, if a commander is predisposed to be taciturn as was the case with Franks, then technology restricts his ability to communicate effectively to an even greater degree. An ironic footnote to the Secretary of Defense's obsession with destroying aircraft on the ground was that most airfields in Afghanistan were littered with abandoned Russian aircraft that were usually smashed up or unserviceable and this was a point noted by the Jawbreaker team at the time.[58] The military decision to neutralize the runway was the correct one, but the micromanaging of Rumsfeld and the separation of Franks from his component were just further distractions and friction in an ineffective early phase of operations.

What is quite apparent is that for the first couple of weeks, the strategy behind OEF was simply not working and in fact was perhaps generating the conditions for a negative outcome. Quite conversely in a regional sense, support for the Taliban was actually increasing during this period with an estimated 100 people a day crossing the border from Pakistan to join the Taliban.[59] For the Jawbreaker team, the inefficiency and lack of effectiveness of the US bombing campaign was becoming a serious liability because how could they persuade fighters in the Northern Alliance to sign up with the American effort if the first operations proved so clumsy and misdirected. As Schroen notes of the first impressions of the US campaign on the ground, "three days into the campaign and the Taliban front lines had yet to be hit. The Northern Alliance leadership was getting worried, and from what we were seeing in their intercepts of enemy traffic, the Taliban were encouraged and their morale was high."[60] The failure of CENTCOM and its higher-level decision makers and planners to understand the true parameters of the situation in Afghanistan and what was and what was not

important to both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance was a serious case of military ineptitude. It broke one of the fundamentals of command and leadership, taught at the most basic level in military academies: it did not appreciate the strategic situation in front of them, not just for the first few days of operations, but for several weeks.

The inability to adjust to the strategic realities on the ground perhaps provides an indication of the command bubble that Rumsfeld, the political elites in Washington and Franks as well as CENTCOM had created for themselves. The command setup for OEF from the military perspective was horribly skewed, parochial, and insular. The wisdom and advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) was marginalized, and Franks' relationship with his more senior colleagues was also extremely poor and pithily summed up by his own description of the JCS as "Title Ten motherfuckers."[61] This was unusual at the very least: junior officers generally do not express such negative comments about more senior officers if they value continuing up the ladder of promotion. Of more concern, it meant that Franks was deliberately isolating himself from people to whom he could potentially turn to for advice and counsel. More importantly, these were officers whose influence within their own services could offer great advantage with regard to the smooth allocation of resources. Instead, Franks seemed content to plow his own furrow with regard to his own command and interrelationship with senior officers. To a large degree, US military elites were divided at a critical moment of the crisis in Afghanistan.

The Afghan model refers to the use of Special Operations Forces, indigenous forces, and air power to apply precise military force to overwhelm and defeat an opposing regime.

Strategic Deadlock October 2001

There are many differing interpretations of how the US-led campaign in Afghanistan unfolded in 2001. Official accounts argue that the "strategy" seamlessly shifted to a different phase of operations in November or the Special Forces/Air Power nexus. Less generous interpretations suggest that in October 2001, CENTCOM's strategy was simply not working; yet it persevered with the "air power first" approach for nearly a month. As Gary Schroen reveals in late October 2001 that when established Special Forces were on the ground in Afghanistan and ready to take the fight to the enemy, "the team's calls for aircraft often went unheeded, because the aircraft sorties were scheduled for other areas of the country. It was only when an aircraft had struck its assigned targets and had ordnance left that it would be released to respond to a call from the Triple Nickel."[62]

First-hand evidence of this nature reveals that the Special Forces/air power combination was not the primary thrust of the initial strategy. If this situation was typical for all the Special Forces in theater, it reveals that CENTCOM had still not realized by this stage of operations of where its focus should be and was still pursuing a flawed application of air power. The emphasis on targets being selected and assets directed to them centrally by planners based in Saudi Arabia and Tampa is indicative of a micromanaged and misdirected air campaign that was not being applied with discrimination toward a successful outcome. The sheer ineffectiveness of the first three to four weeks of CENTCOM's military activities is indicative of poor operational strategy and a general inability of policy elites to understand and intervene effectively in the situation facing them. The application of air power in this phase was just one indicator of a general malaise in the overall use of force in Afghanistan. Of equal significance was the tentative use of Special Forces and SpecOps Forces in direct action operations. The raid on Mullah Omar's compound on October 20, 2001 stands out in the OEF campaign as noteworthy example of the systemic confusion among CENTCOM's planners and leadership cadres as to how to use ground forces in concert with the existing overarching operational strategy. According to Tommy Franks of the compound,

> We had intentionally chosen not to bomb that target, hoping it would serve as a magnet for Omar and his deputies. [. . .] The Gecko operators had orders to take the site by force, to kill or capture any enemy found there, and to exploit the target for intelligence.[63]

The thinking behind the raid was to a large degree an exercise in naivety and a complete misuse of precious strategic assets in the form of Tier 1 Special Forces. First and foremost, the explicit rationale for the mission or intelligence gathering was deeply flawed because Mullah Omar could not read or write so it begged the question of what sort of intelligence material would be available, apart from that provided by capturing Taliban personnel. Furthermore, it also raises the question of why a counter-modern movement such as the Taliban would possess a wealth of written intelligence material more suitable to a Western military force than an organization that relied heavily on word of mouth to communicate important tactical issues. In this light, Franks' rationale was deeply questionable. Perhaps a more likely explanation for the use of Delta Force, the US Army's most secret Special Forces unit that specializes in counter-terrorism activities and hostage rescue, was the hope that Mullah Omar and his assistants might actually be in the compound at the time. Without actual intelligence that he was there, this was a "faith-based strategy" working on the chance that the Taliban might be present that

night. The problem with such approaches to military operations was that it leaves a great deal to fortune, especially with regard to the size of the opposition in the compound.

The raid on Mullah Omar's compound on the night of October 20 actually encompassed three distinct operations: a night parachute jump on a disused air field or Objective Rhino near Kandahar by US SpecOps Forces in the form of the US Rangers; a Delta Squadron (Task Force Gecko) attack on Mullah Omar's compound outside of Kandahar; and the insertion of a small reconnaissance into the area. The rationale for the use of the Rangers, which was filmed by the military and subsequently shown the next day by Donald Rumsfeld at one of his press briefings, remains unclear. According to the commander of CENTCOM, "the goal of the Rangers would be to secure the field as a lodgment for U.S. Marines, our first conventional force in Afghanistan."[64] The problem with this explanation is that after landing the Rangers did not dig in, but rather called in helicopters and evacuated the site. A SEAL team was sent into the site several weeks later to prepare it for the arrival of the US Marines.[65] Another explanation is provided by the official US history of SOF in Afghanistan which states that "almost 200 Army Rangers parachute assaulted on a landing strip in the southern Afghan desert to publicly demonstrate that the American military could put 'boots on the ground' deep inside enemy territory at will."[66] This explanation dovetails well with Seymour Hersh's interpretation that the assault had little military value and was according to one of his sources, "a television show."[67] If correct, then the Rangers' assault on Objective Rhino, a cost-free yet media-friendly event, had more to do with public opinion in the United States than to do with generating any form of military effect against the Taliban on the ground in Afghanistan. If so, it is another indicator of the crisis of thinking in CENTCOM at this stage of the campaign. The use of Delta Force against Mullah Omar's compound proved to be almost a disaster in the making as they were clearly inserted with the minimum of onsite intelligence about the place they were about to assault. According to one informed observer, "the Delta team stormed the complex and found little of value: no Mullah and no significant documents. 'As they came out of the house, the shit hit the fan,' one senior officer recounted. 'It was like an ambush. The Taliban were firing light arms and either R.P.G.s' – rocket-propelled grenades – 'or mortars.'"[68] According to a Delta Force officer who was present in the initial planning stages of the operation, the Special Forces were told, "there wasn't any enemy on either target."[69] The overall commander of the secret military units stressed the "psychological"[70] aspect of the raid "that if we raided empty targets in Afghanistan and filmed the raids for the world to see (he always said CNN), we would have some kind of morale-breaking effect on the enemy."[71] This state of affairs portrays a

very different interpretation of initial military operations in Afghanistan and reveals a worrying operationally ungrounded approach to military effectiveness and the use of Special Forces by senior commanders.

The consequences of this failed and almost disastrous raid could have been extremely deleterious for the fledgling OEF campaign at this stage. First, there was an increasing perception that it was not going to plan, and had any American soldiers been killed and left behind for the Taliban to parade to the international media, the ramifications could have been far reaching. As it was, one of the Chinook helicopters that was extracting the soldiers lost part of its undercarriage,[72] and this was shown to international news networks by the Taliban. A very similar situation to the media storm over the shooting down of American helicopters in Somalia in 1993 and the bodies of US service personnel being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu was only narrowly averted by the skill and luck of the Delta Team in Afghanistan in getting everyone out. Second, the "planning" underpinning the mission displayed an extremely poor awareness of how Special Forces should be used in direct action missions. These are highly valuable, very well trained, and expensive soldiers that cannot be frittered away on missions with significant intelligence gaps in every sense of the word. Finally, one element that cannot be discounted from the events of October 20, 2001 is whether US Army bureaucratic politics was playing a part in the decision to use Rangers and Delta Force on the same night of operations.[73] The creed of the Rangers is "Rangers lead the way," but their involvement was peripheral, if not unnecessary, in a military sense and their activities did not provoke any significant effect against the enemy. As for Delta Force, the Mullah Omar fiasco was yet another example of how the US armed forces have struggled to employ this highly useful unit since its inception in the late 1970s.[74] It is interesting that when Seymour Hersh's piece in the *New Yorker* on the raid was published that CENTCOM decided initially that Delta Force would be redeployed out of theater for other missions.[75] This is further evidence of the confusion among senior military planners as to how to use these units effectively, but also their role in the overall campaign. There was also significant dissatisfaction within Delta Force concerning the command arrangements[76] and the slavish reliance on video teleconferencing between Tampa, Washington, and Oman, the location of Delta Force. It created "a false sense of situational awareness"[77] because the special operators were still "almost a thousand miles away"[78] from Afghanistan. This unique perspective provides an intimate snapshot of the organizational climate in which the Special Forces assigned to direct action activities found themselves and also the "out of touch" sense of senior command staff.

The early phase of military activities in OEF paints a very different picture to that offered by proponents of the Afghan model thesis that on being offered two military strategies: the CENTCOM one and a CIA/SF plan, "President

Bush selected the plan proposed by the CIA rather than the one offered by the Joint Chiefs."[79] In contrast, this analysis puts forward a far more chaotic interpretation in which strategy was made up in a hurry and was composed of more trial and error rather than being a coherent, well-considered, and thought-out unified plan of attack. It is quite clear by focusing on processes rather than outcomes that American strategy on the ground in Afghanistan was confused, uninformed, and misdirected for almost a month into the campaign. Much of the fault must be attributed to dysfunctional political and military elite decision-making structures, interfaces, and personalities. There was very little guiding or firm management from the president or his immediate command staff due to personality traits and clashes between strong-mind individuals. In addition, the climate of the Department of Defense was not conducive to an open and holistic approach to strategy formulation due to the negative influence of the personality of Donald Rumsfeld. As a result, a form of strategic vacuum emerged within US military circles due in large part to hesitancy, a misreading of Afghanistan's recent strategic history, and a lack of innovative thinking among senior military leaders and planners. Consequently, this absence of grand and coherent operational strategy was filled by the CIA that did possess a clear plan of action and strategy for responding to the events of 9/11. An unusual set of circumstances thus developed whereby, notwithstanding the flaws in the initial US operation strategy, from the air campaign to the employment of Tier 1 Special Forces and SpecOps Forces, the activities of CIA teams on the ground started to shape overarching strategy toward a successful short-term outcome from November 2001 onwards. As such, the seeds of the coming victory derived from ad hoc bottom-up pressures by small units of the US armed forces working with air power rather than being top-down crafted operational strategy carefully directed by political and military elites based in Washington and Tampa.

Questions

1. Why was Afghanistan such a challenging theater of military operations in 2001?
2. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the air power "first" approach to fighting the Taliban/Al Qaeda in 2001.
3. What is the difference in terms of roles and activities between the CIA and SOF in wartime behind enemy lines?
4. Why did it take US military forces so long to have an effect on the Taliban regime?
5. Why did the United States struggle to generate an initial strategy in Afghanistan in 2001?

Notes

1 Richard B. Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr, "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model." *International Security,* 30, no. 3 (Winter 2005/2006): 124–160.
2 Fred Kaplan, *Daydream Believers: How a Few Grand Ideas Wrecked American Power* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2008) (Kindle Edition).
3 See Jeffery S. Lantis and Darryl Howlett, "Strategic Culture" in *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, eds John Baylis, James Wirtz, Colin S. Gray, and Eliot Cohen (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 83 (Second Edition).
4 This explanation is explored in more detail in Chapter 4.
5 See Alastair Finlan, *Contemporary Military Culture and Strategic Studies: US and UK Armed Forces in the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2013) for a discussion of the cultural roots of these preferences.
6 Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 251.
7 See Donald P. Wright et al., *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom October 2001–September 2005* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 35 (Kindle Edition).
8 US Marines traditionally insist on combined arms formations being deployed in a combat theater.
9 US Special Forces, for instance, acquired 600 copies of Lester Grau, *The Bear Went over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* (London: Frank Cass, 2001). See Doug Stanton, *Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of US Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 47.
10 Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 243.
11 George Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Virgin Books, 2010), 3 (Kindle Edition).
12 Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 81.
13 Bush, *Decision Points*, 16 (Kindle Edition).
14 Dick Cheney with Liz Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2011), 36 (Kindle Edition).
15 Andrew Cockburn, *Rumsfeld: An American Disaster* (London: Verso, 2007), 90.
16 Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 30.
17 Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
18 Cockburn provides an illuminating perspective on the key figures and ambitions of this group of like-minded individuals. See Cockburn, *Rumsfeld: An American Disaster*, 102–107.
19 See Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 31.
20 Colin Powell with Tony Koltz, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012) (Kindle Edition).
21 Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 325 (Kindle Edition).

22 Rice, *No Higher Honour* (Kindle Edition).
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 See Ivo Daalder and J. M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution I Foreign Policy* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2003), 108.
26 Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds and trans., *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 87 (Explanation added).
27 Alastair Campbell and Richard Scott, eds, *The Blair Years: Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries* (London: Arrow Books, 2008), 583 (Kindle Edition).
28 General Sir Mike Jackson, *Soldier* (London: Corgi Books, 2008), 392.
29 Franks, *American Soldier*, 261.
30 See Lester Grau, *The Bear Went over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).
31 Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and The Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 146–147.
32 Martin Shaw, *The New Western Way of Warfare: Risk-Transfer War and Its Crisis in Iraq* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).
33 Ibid., 73.
34 Ibid., 19.
35 Andrew Bacevich makes an interesting counterpoint here and emphasizes the role of US military leadership in Somalia for creating the conditions for a withdrawal. See Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009), 149.
36 Gary C. Schroen, *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006), 15–16.
37 Robin Moore, *Taskforce Dagger: The Hunt for Bin Laden* (London: Pan Books, 2004), 67.
38 Schroen, *First In*, 16–21.
39 Alastair Finlan, *Special Forces, Strategy and the War on Terror: Warfare by Other Means* (London: Routledge, 2008), 76.
40 Schroen, *First In*, 33–34 (Explanation added).
41 Sean Naylor estimates that Delta Force had about 1,000 personnel in 2001/2002 of which 250 were operators. See Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (New York: Berkley Books, 2005), 30.
42 Schroen, *First In*, 25.
43 Ibid., 78.
44 Ibid., 63–64.
45 Schroen, *First In*, 36.
46 Franks, *American Soldier*, 312–313.
47 Schroen, *First In*, 148.
48 Ibid., 215.
49 The Jawbreaker team possessed a former Special Forces member who was an expert on these systems and who brought his own laser equipment with him. See ibid., 169.
50 Tim Ripley, *Operation Enduring Freedom: America's Afghan War 2001 to 2002* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Aviation, 2011), 54.

51 Ibid.
52 Benjamin Lambeth, *Air Power against Terror: America's Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2005), 85.
53 Ibid., 78–80.
54 Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, 148.
55 Franks, *American Soldier*, 234.
56 Lambeth, *Air Power against Terror*, 304.
57 Woodward, *State of Denial*, 78.
58 Schroen, *First In*, 59.
59 Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, 11.
60 Schroen, *First In*, 161.
61 Franks, *American Soldier*, 277.
62 Schroen, *First In*, 240–241.
63 Franks, *American Soldier*, 303.
64 Ibid.
65 Dick Couch, *Down Range: Navy SEALS in the War on Terrorism* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2005), 72–81.
66 Charles Briscoe, Richard Kiper, James Schroder, and Kalev Sepp, eds, *U.S. Army Special Operations in Afghanistan* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 2006), 97.
67 Seymour Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 122.
68 Ibid., 124–125.
69 Pete Blaber, *The Mission, the Men and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2008), 151.
70 Ibid., 152.
71 Ibid.
72 Franks, *American Soldier*, 305.
73 See Finlan, *Special Forces, Strategy and the War on Terror*, 23–24.
74 The failed attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran in 1980 is just one typical example.
75 Blaber, *The Mission, the Men and Me*, 174.
76 Ibid., 155.
77 Ibid., 154.
78 Ibid., 155.
79 Andres et al., "Winning with Allies," 130.

CHAPTER FOUR

US/UK "strategy" in Afghanistan: The first five years (2001–2006)

Deus ex machina is an unexpected intervention or happening that saves what appears to be a hopeless situation.

The evolution of US-led strategy in Afghanistan from 2001 onwards provides a foundational insight into why Western forces have found themselves locked in an increasingly intractable insurgency over the last 12 years. The absence of a coherent grand strategy from the very start of operations in 2001 to the present day has profoundly stymied the ability of theater-based military commanders to construct a sustainable long-term plan of action in Afghanistan. The ad hoc emergence of the so-called Afghan model predicated around "a small group of Afghan rebels working with U.S. special forces and U.S. airpower"[1] and its extraordinary short-term success on the battlefield with the apparent complete rout, and removal of the Taliban regime also created a false afterglow of political and military achievement, nationally and internationally. With an emphasis inside American elite political and military decision-making circles on short-term measures and the patchwork response of the international community to nation building, it allowed deleterious levels of atrophy and corruption to build up within Afghan society. Together with the Iraq distraction, these processes generated economic, political, and social vacuums across Afghanistan and have been exploited by a reconstituted neo-Taliban movement that has exploited the cleavages and holes within US-led political and military strategy in the country. The perilous military position of British forces fighting insurgents in Helmand since 2006 provides a microcosm of a wider systemic political and strategic failure of US/NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

strategy that potentially jeopardizes the long-term success of Western intervention in Afghanistan.

The absence of coalition grand strategy

The US-led campaign in Afghanistan was undermined from the outset by the complete absence of a workable grand strategy that would undermine military effectiveness in the country for over a decade. Military action without grand strategy indicates a weak understanding of the management of state violence and a lack of awareness that firepower and tactics are not substitutes for strategy. Such misconceptions are easy to make because at the level of tactics, grand strategy appears irrelevant: soldiers engage each other with bullets, bombs, and occasionally, even in the twenty-first century, with bayonets.[2] Will, firepower, and destruction combine together in a seductive to the distant spectator orchestra of violence and outcomes are decided by death, defeat, or surrender. Tactics and firepower, however, are necessary but not sufficient conditions for successful long-term outcomes in warfare when applied on a larger scale. The application of conventional force against a state necessitates not just one tactical engagement, but often hundreds of them, if not thousands in a total war, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes sequentially. Without higher direction, these military actions are expensive state-funded brawls that are noisy, loud, often visually impressive yet ultimately meaningless over time. Grand strategy, in contrast, is the tight coordination of achievable political ends with military means. It can only come about through civilian decision-making elites setting out a realistic desired political end state of the operation to their military commanders. Armed with this critical political direction, military elites construct operational strategy or the higher direction of tactical engagements around meeting these objectives. By itself, firepower, or in modern parlance, going kinetic[3] is not a strategy and, without synchronized coordination between the various levels of warfare, tactical, operational, and grand strategy, the great danger of fighting this way has been pithily summed up by Colin Powell as "bomb and hope."[4] In other words, in the absence of grand strategy, the nexus between political and military elites and the higher direction of military activities will be missing. Its significance for the outcome of the military campaign depends on the type of operations conducted and the quality of the military commanders in the field. For state-level operations, its omission is potentially catastrophic because it breaks the ends/means chain that has dominated Western strategic thinking since Clausewitz.[5] Instead, a means/means focus and a deterministic yet drift-prone operational mindset emerge in which tactics and firepower become synonyms for strategy, regardless of

their long-term shortcomings. Good-quality military commanders will not tolerate engaging in such self-defeating activities, but lesser ones will either not recognize the foolishness of their situation or simply acquiesce to their political superiors without concern for those who will inherit the inevitable military morass.

A way of war describes a consistent approach or style toward warfare that is replicated by particular armed forces over long periods of time.

The American way of planning war

The root of the strategic vacuum behind operations in Afghanistan can be traced back in part to the American way of planning to apply force and it is useful to dwell a little on its historical roots. The US approach owes much to the Prussian/German way of war that caught the attention and imagination of military institutions around the world in the mid-nineteenth century. The extraordinary success of the Prussian Army in the Wars of Unification (1864–1866) and later in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870– 1871 served as a model for emulation for other military institutions around the world. The origins of the Prussian/German Way of Warfare have been traced back by scholars to the Great Elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William I (1640–1688) and, not withstanding the predilection for highly drilled and disciplined troops, its most visible feature has been an institutional preference for "offensive warfare."[6] A way of warfare, however, is not just a set of prescriptions that can be adopted by any army and then translated into immediate success on the battlefield. Ways of warfare are rooted heavily within the social and cultural milieu of a nation or state that produces them. War is social practice and mirrors the societies engaged in it. The two cannot be disaggregated and, consequently, the emulation of foreign practices of war contains with it as many risks as it does benefits. For example, a less apparent aspect of the Prussian way of warfare that contributed significantly to the overall success was the role of strong-willed senior officers who often indulged a predilection for independent actions within a campaign. This has been described as "the kernel"[7] of *Auftragstaktik* or decentralized flexible/mission command made famous by generals such as Erwin Rommel in World War II. In some respects, this facet of the Prussian way of war was unique to its social and cultural context. As Citino explains, "the granting of operational prerogatives to the nobles in combat was not just a good idea; it was of a piece with the social contract of the Prussian state. For the monarch to insist on close supervision of a subordinate commander's plan of action would have been a grievous infraction."[8] Emulating an offensive orientation toward combat

is relatively easy, but producing a senior officer corps of this kind is far more complex because military elites are products of their individual societies. Consequently, the American adoption of the Prussian/Germanic way of warfare contains within it inherent tensions/shortcomings, especially with regard the higher management of combat operations and it does not allow the amount of operational latitude to senior generals that made the Prussians/Germans so successful.

Another important feature of the Prussian way that the United States copied was its means of planning for war. The Prussian model of preparing for war evolved dramatically under General Helmuth von Moltke, the famous Chief of the Prussian General Staff (1857–1888). Moltke realized that the complexity of modern warfare by the mid-nineteenth century required a significantly different approach to military planning. By this time, three interrelated aspects of modern war had caused a degree of transformation in the manner campaigns were being conducted. First, the size of armies had increased hugely, measured in the hundreds of thousands, and size inevitably complicated command and control as well as coordination of large units. For commanders in the field, wielding these behemoths was of an order of complexity far beyond that of their predecessors. Consequently, new systems to ensure that their directions could be rapidly passed down the chain of command would be required. Second, the pace of warfare had stepped up considerably with the introduction of the railroad. This technology would also allow armies to be sustained in the field with fresh troops and munitions for longer and battles in theory could last weeks and months instead of the traditional days or even hours as isolated armies exhausted their stockpiles of flesh and weapons. Finally, enhancements in firepower with new rifles such as needle guns, chassepots, and modern-style artillery made the costs of warfare even greater with higher levels of casualties becoming the norm.

Together, these developments called for a much greater higher organization of the manner in which war was planned. It necessitated the development of a sophisticated and expanded staff officer system or military personnel dedicated to the administrative side of military operations to ensure that manpower and logistics were synchronized and tightly coordinated. It has been claimed that Moltke replaced the operational commander's quick visual appreciation of the battle scene, which in view of the sheer size of armies and vastness of the battlespace was now impossible, with "a filing cabinet filled with plans, scenarios, and mobilization schedules, often requiring only the entry of a date."[9] To a great degree, Moltke's preplanning for war or bureaucratization of operational planning had great merit because it offset the unwieldy tendencies of directing violence in the age of mass armies with enhanced firepower. However, creating a list of possible options for war or a menu for force was not grand strategy or, for that matter, coherent operation strategy. Judgment would still be required in the face

of the actual combat situation and choices made between these guides for action. There was a great danger of inflexibility in such war planning when hostilities opened when faced by changing circumstances on the ground, but Prussian/German social practice of producing senior officers with the ability to execute independent actions based on their own appreciation of the situation and, of course, *Auftragstaktik* overcame this inherent flaw. In addition, the tight integration between Prussian military elites and political elites ensured that grand strategy was always closely coordinated and the interference of the latter over the former at critical times was significantly reduced. At the battle of Sadowa/Koniggratz in 1866, the King of Prussia was heard to remark at a crucial stage of operations, "Moltke, Moltke, we are losing the battle." This was an opinion that his key military commander did not share and, consequently, no remedial action was implemented with the end result that the battle as well as the campaign against the Austrians was won.[10] In Prussian social practice, the military expert was allowed to conduct the campaign in the manner he saw fit without political elite interference with usually spectacular results.

The grafting of a way of warfare from one army to another is fraught with difficulties. The adoption of surface level features such as uniforms, equipment, doctrine, offensive spirit, and tactics is relatively easy. Techniques and procedures can be quantified and broken down into instruction manuals that act as knowledge transmission mechanisms to disseminate information from the highest to the lowest levels of the army. The US Army took such an approach with regard to the Prussian way of warfare. Deborah Avant, writing about military developments in the United States in the nineteenth century, suggests, "after the Civil War, the U.S. Army professionalized itself in a state of isolation. [. . .] The resulting culture was influenced by the admiration with which the army observed the military progress of the Prussians".[11] Military emulation has limits. The material aspects are the easiest features to be copied, but there is an inherent contradiction at the heart of the replication process: military organizations are products of their particular societies and war is social practice, albeit in a violent manner. As a consequence, though the US Army has adopted many of the obvious features of the Prussian way of war, it did not adopt the equally important invisible aspects that contributed to its success. These included the development of an officer corps that possessed a special and almost equal relationship with political elites to enable them to conduct independent actions in defiance of their civilian masters, if necessary, to ensure military success during campaigns. In fact, the liberal democratic constitution of the United States explicitly did not permit American military elites to dominate decision making during campaigns. As a result, social practice was very much in conflict with new military practice. This state of affairs has been positively reinforced on numerous occasions throughout contemporary American history when senior military commanders had

tried to exert their will on particular campaigns. Under the Prussian system, such actions would have been tolerated, but in the United States, political elites strongly resisted such tendencies. By the twentieth century, a notorious example of such a situation was the sacking of the senior US commander during the Korean War (1950–1953), General Douglas MacArthur, by President Truman over differences on how the war was being conducted.[12] By Vietnam, the dominance of civilian control reached new heights with the running of the war by the Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.[13] Even in the First Persian Gulf War of 1991, the Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney, sacked the head of the US Air Force, General Michael Dugan, for publicly and probably inadvertently disagreeing with official policy.[14] These recent positive or negative reinforcements of civilian control over military elites have generated contradictory influences in the US Army's partial bastardized adoption of Prussian practices of war. It has the offensive spirit, it possesses perhaps the most bureaucratized staff and planning system for war in the world and yet, it lacks an officer corps that will ensure on operations that success is achieved by independent actions. In other words, the US Army puts itself in a position to fight offensively and has all the necessary material equipment to fight well, but it does not encourage a headstrong officer corps that will determine a successful strategy, one that may include a deviation from original planning, to win when adverse circumstances dictate its necessity. Ultimately, social practice derived from a particular society and the embedded relationship between military and political elites plays a determining role how nations and states fight war.

For the United States, the inherent contradiction between how its premier military institution organizes itself to fight based to a significant degree on emulating the army of another nation has produced in the twenty-first century a strange compromise that inhibits military effectiveness. Consequently, in times of war, though geared for offensive operations, the US Army does not, unlike the Prussian Army of old, engage in the determination of either grand or operational strategy. Instead, due to the total subordination of military elites to political elites, the US Army prepares, plans, and equips itself for an offensive war, but leaves the construction of strategy to civilian elites. As with any good bureaucracy, it presents civilian decision makers with a menu of force options for them to choose. This was the case with operations in Afghanistan in 2001. Central Command (CENTCOM) under US Army General Tommy Franks presented civilian elites with a list of force options, but not a strategy. The American practice of war by the twenty-first century provided a conducive climate for such a state of affairs to emerge and, as a result, military operations from October 2001 to the Obama administration have been unburdened by an underpinning grand strategy. The disinclination of civilian elites to create such a strategy, if indeed evidence exists that

they knew what it was, combined with the unwillingness of military elites to step in and decisively influence the direction of military operations, led to an unusual situation where force, especially air power, was being applied without tight coordination with the overarching political aim of the campaign.

The Afghan model as *deus ex machina*

In the aftermath of the stunning victory over the Taliban, interpretations about how the critical planning events that led to the battlefield success came about are shrouded in fog and faint memory. Many of the key political and military officials involved in the campaign tend in their memoirs to simply turn the page to the outcome rather than dwell significantly on the immediate steps that led up to it and how it was produced.[15] Vice President Cheney is one of the few political leaders who revealed his doubts about the military effort on November 2, 2001 at a meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) with General Franks.[16] The general provided information on the ongoing air campaign that was now focused on "the massive cave complexes in which the Taliban lived and hid" which amounted to between 150 and 1,000 caves.[17] General Franks' memoirs are perhaps the most coy about this key phase of the Afghan model and devotes very few pages to the critical weeks in early November 2001.[18] In the light of this puzzling information vacuum, some academic scholars have attempted to fill in the blanks by suggesting in some cases a rational choice explanation that argues US policy makers on seeing the failings of the air power first approach deliberately went with another option of supporting the Special Forces (SF)/Northern Alliance effort.[19] This study in contrast makes the case that the emergence of Afghan model was a fortuitous accident or a form of *deus ex machina*, that came about through organic processes on the ground. They generated the necessary conditions for victory that the coalition had been striving for since early October. This perspective is reinforced by the accounts of SF who conducted operations in Afghanistan and is best summarized by Colonel Pete Blaber of Delta Force who argues that "these astonishing battlefield successes weren't the offspring of some master strategist standing on a hilltop and spouting orders. Nor did they come from a master plan; none existed. Instead they were spawned during an operational sweet spot."[20] Put simply, the Afghan model is an accurate description of the style of warfare that emerged organically from the ground upwards from November onwards, but the term "model" itself lends a sense of planned construction that does not tally with the actual reality in the overarching military direction of the US campaign that occurred prior to its manifestation.

By late October 2001, the military operation was going badly. A combination of confused civilian interference at the highest levels of

US military planning, compliant military elites in CENTCOM, and the apparent failure of the preferred technological approach toward warfare in the form of air power meant that military effectiveness on the ground against the Taliban and Al Qaeda was negligible at best. Even when the first SF were deployed on the ground with Northern Alliance forces, they were not given priority support from air power. This state of affairs was described in detail by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officers visiting US SF at Baghram Air Base:

> The master sergeant, a combat veteran from the Gulf War with whom Murray had become friends, shook his head slowly and gave Stan a wry smile. "Same as usual, Stan. More targets than a hound dog has fleas, and we'll be lucky to get two or three aircraft to respond to our requests for strikes."[21]

US military strategy had become disconnected with the reality on the ground in Afghanistan. A significant source for the perpetuation of a flawed strategy can be strongly linked to influential facets within US military culture and a failure to imagine war differently. The heavy reliance on the air technology-first approach to waging war was actually a long-standing trend in US defense policy. As Adrian Lewis suggests, "from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom the preferred American approach to war has been to substitute technology for manpower."[22] In this respect, CENTCOM's approach to operations in Afghanistan was entirely consistent with the modern American way of war, but this consistency does not explain why General Franks, an army officer, should persist with operations that were clearly having little effect.

The remarkable feature of the bombing campaign and the selection of priorities by the end of October 2001 was its fixation on target sets that were more appropriate if facing a traditional conventional enemy such as the Warsaw Pact or Saddam Hussein's Iraq in the early 1990s. After all, Franks and the vast majority of senior officers in CENTCOM in 2001 had spent their entire careers fighting either the Cold War or being involved in the Gulf War I of 1991. To what extent these formative experiences were dominating the collective expectations of the key decision makers remains open to speculation. Groupthink[23] could possibly explain why US military planners persisted with a strategy leading down a blind alley. Irving Janis describes it, "to refer to a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action."[24] In other words, thinking among people in groups tends to coalesce around a consensus perception that may or may not be apt for a particular circumstance. Norman Dixon provides a good insight into the collective psychology of a military group seized by this phenomenon and

argues, "far from diminishing the chances of ineptitude, the group actually accentuates the effects of those very traits which may lead to incompetence in individual commanders."[25]

The location of CENTCOM's key commanders in Florida and Saudi Arabia may provide some basis for the level of disconnection with the unfolding campaign in Afghanistan, and the heavy reliance on air power and electronic means for gathering intelligence such as spy satellites and aircraft could have contributed to the bubble effect being created around these key decision makers. The heavy reliance on video teleconference (VTC) to connect command staffs also unwittingly created a sense of detachment away from the operational realities when in fact it was designed to do the opposite. As one officer based on Masirah Island in Oman explains of VTC,

> we spent at least five hours every day sitting around darkened conference tents, huddled together like thought lemmings watching staff officers around the globe [. . .] There was no real collaborative give-and-take involved – which, if allowed, might actually make the technology useful. Instead the VTC protocol was for everyone to sit around stoically, and the only one who was allowed to talk was the commanding general of our higher headquarters.[26]

The employment of VTC was supposed to improve "situational awareness"[27] but to a number of those involved in Operation Enduring Freedom it did not. Using this technology in this way merely enhanced the likelihood of groupthink taking hold. Of course, some personalities are more susceptible to groupthink, especially "people fearful of disapproval and rejection"[28] and shared elements do encourage it such as "homogeneity of educational and social background."[29] Finally, the institutional climate of a military institution with its explicit adherence to chain of command, leader/subordinate relationships, and constrained exchanges of views between senior and junior officers because the latter are dependent on the former's opinion for promotion creates a perfect nurturing environment for "groupthink" to embed itself within command structures.

One of the more interesting aspects of the failure of US military commanders to adapt their plan rapidly to events in Afghanistan is revealed by the deployment of US SF on the ground from the night of 19/20 October 2001 onwards. Notwithstanding having access to the "gold standard" of intelligence-gathering[30] available or in other words, trusted human agency in the form of American soldiers actually watching the Taliban at extreme close distances in some respects just hundreds of yards apart; however, this vital information did not immediately change US air power strategy. This facet begs the question of whether US military channels of communication had broken down or that this information was given a lesser priority in

the overall decision-making process. It shed a harsh light on CENTCOM as an organization and how well the connections between the various subcomponents of the three services worked. In theory, as a joint command, there should have been no integration barriers between different parts of the military machine, but skeptics suggest that the "joint" project in the United States' military is not as well as established as the three services would care to admit. Lewis argues "jointness is an idea, not a fact."[31] In the case of Operation Enduring Freedom, the US Air Force appeared to be dominating the overarching strategy, notwithstanding that a conventional army officer was in charge and other voices/approaches were not enjoying the same privileged position.

One element that cannot be ignored is the low amount of cultural capital that US SF possessed within the overall organization of the US armed forces. Susan Marquis describes Special Operations Forces (SOF) as a "precarious value"[32] within the services and Thomas Adams reveals that the US Army had "long distrusted the whole idea of elite units."[33] The poor reputation that US SF emerged with from the Vietnam War among conventional officers,[34] their mixed performance in the Gulf War of 1991, and the infamous *Blackhawk Down* incident in Mogadishu in 1993 did not provide them with a great amount of influence in the US armed forces by 2001. According to Hy Rothstein who has studied US military culture closely, "a detached observer or historian will have difficulty grasping just how alien and even distasteful unconventional operations are viewed by those trained and socialized in conventional military behavior."[35] Taken together, it raises the question of why did CENTCOM deploy SF if they were not going to utilize them effectively from the earliest possible moment. To what extent, this was just another element of the menu of force options placed on the table and certainly not at the top of the list that was employed to cover a base, but not considered an important one remains open to speculation.

One observer given unique access to the Green Berets provides an interesting snapshot of how General Franks responded to the tasking of the key SF's commander of TASK FORCE DAGGER, Colonel John Mulholland of the 5th Special Forces Group. His account notes that "General Brown had given Colonel John Mulholland something every Army officer dreams of: the freedom to command. As long as TASK FORCE DAGGER operated within its charter, conducting unconventional warfare to overthrow the Taliban, John could fight the battle as he wished. General Franks reluctantly agreed."[36] General Doug Brown was head of US Army Special Operation Command, a very senior and influential officer who Franks could not ignore in the chain of command and, consequently, the employment of US SF and the role of Colonel Mulholland became something of an independent, rather than a dependent variable in the Afghan theater of operations. In some respects, it marked the unwitting introduction of a parallel strategy and

one that was still being worked out by the SF themselves and independent of the CIA within Operation Enduring Freedom. At the start of the initial deployments of Green Beret A-Teams into Afghanistan to work with the Northern Alliance, there was still a debate with the SF community as to what their role would be either providing training for the indigenous forces or conducting more proactive activities such as utilizing laser target designators to guide air force precision munitions with unprecedented accuracy on to Taliban positions on the front lines. As Schroen reveals on the eve of the first SF insertion, "there had been no firm decision by the U.S. military on that role [laser targeting] for the A-Team, at least none that had been communicated to Rick or me in our conversations with Headquarters, or with Colonel Mulholland in Uzbekistan."[37] The crisis in the air power approach to operations in Afghanistan by the last week of October appears to be the catalyst for the profound shift in US operational strategy, but even then, it was uncertainty among senior commanders as to what difference the close integration of air power with US SF and the Northern Alliance would make. The decision General Franks made on an airfield in his Air Force transport plan in Dushanbe, Tajikistan while meeting General Fahim Khan, the leader of the Northern Alliance, with Colonel Mulholland alongside of him was to subordinate US air power, previously working as the independent element, to support US SF and the indigenous forces on the ground. At the end of the meeting in which Franks offered $5 million dollars to the Northern Alliance, the CENTCOM general admitted revealingly "I didn't know whether we had traded a horse or bought a carpet,"[38] which indicates a degree of skepticism. Nevertheless, from this moment onwards, like a *deus ex machina*, the Afghan model appeared to emerge out of thin air and extraordinary battlefield success occurred within a matter of days.

In reality, the failure of the primary war plan and the "technology-first" approach to warfare allowed endogenous pressures on the margins of US military culture to determine the short-term successful direction of the campaign. A junior officer, Colonel Mulholland, and a pariah subculture of the armed forces in the form of SF perhaps more than most sources acknowledge laid the foundations for the Afghan victory. The CIA played an important part in facilitating relationships between SF and the Northern Alliance and seeding ideas about how they could be used in theater, but it was the soldiers themselves aided by clear leadership that routed the Taliban. The combination of SF and air power, which previously had proved to be a blunt instrument, now appeared a magical combination. Taliban front lines collapsed rapidly and the Northern Alliance quickly pushed forward to seize the vital population centers of the country. Mazar-i-Sharif fell between 8 and 10 November (Taliban resistance had repulsed earlier Northern Alliance efforts) and the capital, Kabul, was captured just a few days later. By 11 December 2001, the Taliban regime had been removed from office by a new interim government. Of more importance, however,

this rapid progress was completely unexpected by the senior planners in CENTCOM and Washington who demonstrated a very poor grasp of operational strategy from the start of operations onwards, but were happy to share the plaudits in view of the outcome. What the US SF provided was not a substitute for strategy; however, it did provide a quick fix to the operational logjam that CENTCOM had largely created for itself.

Tora Bora

The inability to capture Osama Bin Laden and to destroy the Al Qaeda network decisively around his stronghold of Tora Bora in the White Mountains to the south of Jalalabad and near the border with Pakistan represented the failure of the primary war aim of the United States in Afghanistan. The lack of success concerning operations around Tora Bora has been attributed to numerous external factors that stymied the possibility of a positive outcome. The first of these relates to the mountainous environment around Tora Bora, which made conducting operations extremely difficult. According to one participant in the operations, "you have to see it to believe it. I personally conducted a recon up to 9,000 feet and I was still in the foothills. Steep peaks, deep valleys, small foot trails, and that was the good part."[39] Notwithstanding the possession of some of the most advanced military equipment in the world, fighting at altitude, sometimes over 10,000 feet,[40] created very significant problems particularly with regard to helicopter operations because only the most powerful machines of the Chinook two-rotor variety can operate well at such heights. In addition, the environment favored the defender and Al Qaeda fighters enjoyed the benefits of dominating the high ground and firing down on the attackers. Finally, the cave complexes themselves presented very difficult targets to assault because mountains can absorb massive amounts of conventional firepower with little effect. This reduced the scope for useful air operations and bombs dropped from aircraft would usually only impact around cave entrances and not on the more important inner areas. The employment of caves as defensive positions in view of the limitation of air power meant that the only really effective means of clearing them would involve the use of ground forces assaulting them. Without prior reconnaissance of the interior layout of them, which was highly unlikely, such blind assaults would inevitably accrue significant casualties under even the most favorable circumstances because the defender has the advantage in such situations.

The second key external factor in the inability to capture or kill Osama Bin Laden and his fighters concerned the American employment of indigenous

fighters alongside of US/UK SF. Local Afghan militia forces provided the all-important major manpower component of the operations around Tora Bora, yet critics have described a number of inherent failings in the Afghan contribution. Stephen Biddle highlights the lack of will among the indigenous troops to close with the enemy around the cave complexes and suggests that, "many now see this ground force hesitancy as having allowed Osama bin Laden and much of his command structure to escape capture and flee into neighboring Pakistan."[41] This is one of the great criticisms of the Afghan model: it depends heavily on the motivation and especially the skills base of the indigenous forces that may restrict its utility in other theaters. Others such as Andres, Wills, and Griffith make the point that by the time operations around Tora Bora started in late November 2001, it was quite clear that the Taliban had been defeated and therefore the war aims of the Afghans had been met. They note "the Afghans had little quarrel with al-Qaida – their enemy was the Taliban"[42] and, as a consequence, it has been alleged that deals between Afghan militias and Al Qaeda fighters were done "in return for safe passage"[43] into Pakistan. To a degree, a better awareness of Afghan culture, pithily described by a CIA agent with long experience of the country and its society as "you cannot buy an Afghan's loyalty, but you can rent it,"[44] would have helped to offset some of these predictable elements of employing indigenous forces around Tora Bora.

The most important negative exogenous factor, however, can be attributed to facets of US military culture as exemplified by CENTCOM. The Afghan model was a product of marginalized endogenous elements within the US armed forces that constructed a short-term quick fix to operational level problems caused by CENTCOM's inability to construct an effective means to wage warfare in Afghanistan. It should be unsurprising in view of the lack of authorship of the Afghan model in the command structures of CENTCOM that it should be slavishly applied to the situation around Tora Bora, whether appropriate or not. A major failure of imagination to understand that a new approach would be needed for operations around Tora Bora was at the heart of the problem. The command element of CENTCOM struggled, at various stages of major operations in Enduring Freedom, to read events accurately on the ground and tailor military activities precisely toward their needs. The absence of adaptive processes at the level of strategy indicates a profound disconnection between ends or the fulfillment of military objectives and means or the application of force. This was a flaw in American military leadership that never appeared capable of grasping the complexities of unconventional warfare and its requirements in Afghanistan. Consequently, there is a strong sense of the perpetuation of an ad hoc approach that had produced startling and unexpected success against the Taliban without seriously considering the scope of its utility against Al Qaeda.

On the face of things, operations around Tora Bora demanded a very different approach to applying military forces if the odds of capturing/killing Osama Bin Laden were to be significantly improved. First, notwithstanding the challenges of fighting in the White Mountains, a stronger cordon around the area of operations, could have been put in place by the employment of conventional forces. There was a sizeable US Marine component at Camp Rhino near Kandahar and light infantry in the form of the 10th Mountain Division or even the rapid deployment of airborne elements such as Rangers and Paratroopers could have been put into effect from the United States in relatively short order. However, conventional forces were not seriously considered for the operation, notwithstanding that "Allied commanders on the ground" suggested this course of action, but "US generals feared this might produce many more casualties and the 'risk aversion' mentality won the day."[45] Casualty and risk aversion also appeared to hamper coalition SOF operations around Tora Bora when even the primary ambition of the mission seemed in sight. Robin Moore reveals that:

> At least once the SAS were sure they had their sights on bin laden. They believed they had him trapped in a small valley of Tora Bora. The plan was to hunt as they would hunt game animals in Africa. They would be in two groups; one would go in and push al-Qaida and bin laden into a run. As if beating their drums on the Serengeti plains of Kenya, they would use their personal weapons and grenade launchers to flush the terrorists out. The second group would be the shooters at "the edge of the high grass". They would wait in the trap and kill everything that crossed their path.[46]

The operation required close air support and the assistance of Delta Force, the US equivalent of the Special Air Service (SAS),[47] but it was not given permission to proceed because apparently "U.S. commanders in the rear were not ready to risk such casualties, nor were they prepared to release aircraft below 12,000 feet."[48] Risk is inherent in warfare and the inability of senior commanders to conduct operations effectively that could have achieved the main political and military aim of Operation Enduring Freedom raises searching questions about the focus, acumen, and motivations of senior decision makers in the United States at this critical stage of operations. Success in this particular venture would have ensured the accomplishment of the mission and permitted the total and permanent withdrawal of coalition troops from the Afghan theater of operations.

Guerrilla warfare is a method of fighting used by weaker forces against stronger opponents. A guerrilla fighter seeks to be strong enough to eventually fight at the conventional level.

The price of the Afghan model and the Iraq distraction

The collapse of the Taliban regime and the scattering of Al Qaeda across various parts of Asia by the end of 2001 appeared to be a remarkable military feat of arms, but, in reality, the short-term battlefield success merely camouflaged the strategic and operational weak points of the campaign. The failure to capture or kill Osama Bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network was compounded by the successful flight of significant portions of the Taliban leadership, especially its nominal head Mullah Omar into neighboring Pakistan. Together, these elements would reconstitute themselves and form the basis of a powerful insurgency movement that would openly contest the control of the country within a matter of years. The situation is neatly summed up by Fred Kaplan who argues "it wasn't that the United States won the war but lost the peace, as many critics later charged. Rather, the United States won the battle but left the war unfinished. The Taliban were ousted from power, for the moment, but they remained a powerful force."[49] The military alliance and support of indigenous forces within Afghanistan would also come at a price as well. The fall of the Taliban left open a political vacuum at the national, regional, and local levels across Afghanistan and these spaces were rapidly filled by the return of the corrupt and despot warlords that the Taliban had overthrown in the mid-1990s. For ordinary Afghan citizens, the triumph of the US-led coalition merely represented not a genuinely new age of democracy and freedom in the country, but a return to the past. The cost of supporting Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun warlord, albeit a cultured and refined one, who would eventually be the democratically elected leader of the country, was high. Corruption, nepotism, and an extraordinary increase in the production of opium turning Afghanistan into the premier narco-state in the world have been the hallmarks of his administration since 2001.

These inherent flaws in the foundations of Operation Enduring Freedom were compounded to an exponential extent by the distraction of planning for the eventual invasion of Iraq at a critical moment in the Afghan campaign. General Franks provides an illustration of the very moment that Iraq loomed into the Afghan equation,

> on the morning of November 27, 2001, I received an unexpected call from Secretary Rumsfeld. At the time I was working with Gene Renuart and the operations staff on air support for Afghan units pushing into the Spin Mountains around Tora Bora. "General Franks, the President wants us to look at options for Iraq."[50]

The decision to turn attention to Iraq is confirmed by President Bush in his memoirs who notes, "two months after 9/11, I asked Don Rumsfeld to review the existing battle plans for Iraq."[51] The Secretary of Defense reveals that on November 21, the president took him to one side after an NSC meeting and asked, "where do we stand on the Iraq planning."[52] Condoleezza Rice also offers an insight into this decision and indicates, "the President had also been highly frustrated with the military's lack of readiness prior to the invasion of Afghanistan and sought an early outline of the Iraq battle plan if it ultimately proved necessary."[53] Of all the key political players in the Bush administration, it is the vice president who provides a sense of the key impetus for the change of tack. Cheney notes in his memoirs, "The President and I spoke about Iraq privately in the weeks following 9/11. [. . .] I suggested to the president that it would be useful to make certain that Rumsfeld had assigned priority to planning for possible military action against Saddam Hussein."[54] The role of the vice president appeared critical in this extraordinary shift in focus and colleagues within the administration highlight the obsession within Dick Cheney's circle to link Saddam to 9/11, despite the wealth of evidence and the opinion of the CIA that there was no connection.[55] The depth of the conviction included "sifting through raw intelligence data"[56] of the unfiltered/unverified variety to arranging a "highly unusual"[57] meeting in order for Lewis 'Scooter' Libby,[58] the Vice President's Chief of Staff, to offer up a presentation of the "evidence" to the president.

The remit of CENTCOM was vast and encompassed not just parts of Asia but also the Middle East. The decision by American political elites in Washington to open up a new theater of future operations produced for CENTCOM the military planning equivalent of a perfect storm. Why President Bush and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld picked the height of the Afghan campaign to distract the attention of key military leaders who had been struggling just a few weeks previously to do anything effectively on the ground reflects poorly on their management abilities, but the consequences for the military campaign in Afghanistan were enormous. To what extent victory syndrome played a part remains open to question, but overburdening the command staff of a military organization that had demonstrated manifest fragilities with regard to creating coherent military strategy in a challenging environment such as Afghanistan was a recipe for long-term failure. The shift of concentration on Iraq occurred at the time that operations in Afghanistan needed to be focused on closely, yet increasingly attention and assets began to be shifted at a crucial time during the stabilization efforts in the country. One of the key veterans of the Afghan conflict, Gary Schroen, provides a window on the deleterious aspects of the Iraq distraction, especially on the SF and CIA personnel deployed on the border with Pakistan, the vital operational area of contest because "as early as March 2002, the U.S. military began to withdraw many

of the key units involved in this effort, in order to allow them to regroup and train in preparation for the coming war with Iraq. [. . .] the focus on Iraq also began to increase within the CIA."[59] Operation Anaconda, from March 2 to 18, 2002, in the Shai-i-Khot valley should have provided a red light warning to CENTCOM and their political masters that Al Qaeda was still a force to be reckoned with in the aftermath of the collapse of the Taliban regime. One of the key lessons of the battle demonstrated that US intelligence about the numbers of Al Qaeda fighters was horribly wrong. Initial estimates suggested 150–200 fighters[60] when post-battle assessments indicated closer to 1,000[61] in the first week of operations alone. The Afghan model was found starkly wanting as the enemy began to adjust to its strengths and identify its weak areas. It is a point highlighted by Stephen Biddle that in Anaconda "a little-trained allied force under Afghan Gen. Mohammed Zia and supported by U.S. SOF were assigned the limited mission of driving al-Qaida defenders from the 'Tri-cities' area [. . .] They were instead pinned down under hostile fire from prepared defenses [. . .] and eventually withdrew."[62] Others indicate that the failings of the Afghan model had already become apparent some months earlier as the Taliban "mastered cover and concealment so well that U.S. special-ops forces couldn't find them."[63] Notwithstanding the death and injury of numerous American soldiers, far more than the entire campaign the previous year, the US focus on planning for the Iraq campaign to the detriment of operations in Afghanistan continued. The upshot of this misdirected effort was the re-emergence of the Taliban, who are often referred to as neo-Taliban,[64] from around 2003 onwards.[65]

An "inkspot" strategy is a counter-insurgency method to assert military and social control over a limited geographical area by flooding it with troops and strongpoints that gradually spread their influence outwards.

The British approach in Afghanistan

The British operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to the present day have been orientated within the framework of a coalition effort and as a junior partner to the United States. As such, the scope for British independent action or indeed influence on the wider strategy being applied has been limited notwithstanding that Britain has traditionally had a long history of success in modern warfare, from counter-insurgency campaigns in Malaya (1948–1960) to conventional campaigns such as the Falklands Conflict in 1982. Nevertheless, Operation Enduring Freedom marked a step change toward a different style of war management within a coalition partnership that was briefly witnessed in the Persian Gulf War of 1991,

but not on a sustained basis. To a great extent, this was new territory for the modern armed forces of Britain and one that carried with it significant risks and constraints on freedom of action. The close coordination of British political elites with their American counterparts has also been a significant feature of this new strategic environment facing their military forces. Under the direction of Prime Minister Tony Blair, British military elites found themselves working with a pro-interventionist political leader who had used the force option on three separate occasions in the run-up to the outbreak of the Global War on Terror. These included the joint effort with the United States in Operation Desert Fox against Iraq in 1998, the controversial NATO-led Kosovo campaign in 1999 and the very successful unilateral intervention in the former colony of Sierra Leone in 2000. Unlike his predecessors, John Major in the Gulf War of 1991 and Margaret Thatcher with the Falklands Conflict of 1982, Tony Blair had accrued considerable experience in directing military operations with a great deal of success. Blair's style of government, however, was in many respects unique and possessed a number a features that opened up cleavages for friction in the direction of military affairs. The first was his predilection for a sofa-style approach to management. Traditionally, the formulation of British policy relating to military activities in conflicts and campaigns was conducted through traditional mechanisms of government, particularly through specific committees or a specified war cabinet. The benefit of such a formal approach, long established through precedent and experience, was the bringing together of relevant heads of key agencies of state (Ministry of Defense, Foreign office, and Intelligence agencies such as MI6/MI5 for example) with their attendant civil servants. These meetings would run to strict agendas with a process of taking minutes that would provide all stakeholders with a verifiable account of the meeting and a roadmap for action. While Blair continued with a war cabinet approach to discuss key issues of the campaign, he also utilized a more important informal management tool in parallel to this well-established system. This has been described as his "sofa government"[66] in which key personnel would meet with the prime minister to discuss the unfolding military campaign and options for the way ahead with no formal minutes taken, just a collection of key decision makers in Number 10, Downing Street.

Ideally, the formal approach should take precedence over the informal mechanisms because it contained more checks and balances as well as a means to keep an accurate and accountable system of the management of military activities. Under Blair, however, the situation seemed reversed. The danger of such an approach to government was obvious, from policy being made on the hoof without proper deliberation or careful scrutiny and debate between the appropriate stakeholders. It also provided a means of circumventing traditional checks and balances in government. Most importantly, it concentrated enormous power within the prime minister's

office concerning the higher direction of military affairs and British policy concerning the application of force. With a prime minister whose actions were strongly influenced by spin and immediately responding in a positive way (or perceived as such) to public issues, it created a dangerous parallel system of government in which vital life and death decisions on the battlefield could be influenced by the political whim of the day without a thorough, balanced, and carefully considered debate in cabinet. In essence, it seriously reduced the significance of the war cabinet decision-making mechanism.

ISAF–NATO

The most important initial British contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom was through the involvement of British SF in the form of the SAS and the Special Boat Service that played eventually[67] a significant role in the fight against the Taliban, most notably around Mazar-i-Sharif, and subsequently the hunt for Osama Bin Laden around Tora Bora. Some sources suggest that in the same manner as Delta Force, CENTCOM struggled to find a role initially for the SAS and they were briefly withdrawn from theater in November, but returned later.[68] New accounts indicate that "22 SAS Regiment, was led by a former Guards officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ed Butler, and it, along with his counterpart in the Special Boat Service, Lieutenant Colonel James Saunders, would play an important role."[69] These undeclared activities would continue to the present day through the medium of so-called black operations that were kept firmly out of the public limelight. British military elites, however, played an instrumental role in the creation of the UN-organized and later taken on by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) through the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul.[70] This was an area the United States, under the influence of Donald Rumsfeld who was famous for not endorsing nation building,[71] displayed little interest in, notwithstanding the pressing need for security in and around Kabul to ensure the ability of the new interim government to carry out its governance effectively. This mission, headed initially by the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment under the overall command of Major General John McColl[72] proved to be a high point in the British military effort with no initial fatalities from the first deployments in January 2002 onwards. Nevertheless, due to the ad hoc/rushed nature of the operation, very little thought appeared to be given to the long-term nature, role,[73] and commitment of British troops in Afghanistan. The most bizarre deployment of British forces occurred in 2002 when almost 2,000 Royal Marines under the auspices of Operation Jacana were sent to assist US forces fighting Al Qaeda remnants near the border with Pakistan in

the aftermath of Operation Anaconda. This operation, according to some observers, appeared to be a victim of massive hype and spin[74] because the marines had very little contact with the enemy throughout their entire tour that led to huge amounts of criticism, particularly through media outlets, being laid at the door of its commander, Brigadier Roger Lane. Operation Jacana was a microcosm of the dangers of the Whitehall/Downing Street spin machine, of a government that craved positive headlines, for operational military commanders in the field. Brigadier Lane and the Royal Marines had no say as to whether Al Qaeda would fight them, yet domestic political pressure through spin placed this command under extraordinary external pressure in a combat zone. This was not perhaps the best form of civil/military relations, but the Blair system of government encouraged friction and division rather than unity of effort and placed operational commanders in the field under extreme stress.

The Helmand Mission in 2006

The decision to deploy a sizeable British force to Helmand province in 2006 remains one of the most inexplicable strategic decisions of the British contribution to the Afghan mission and one of best examples of how out-of-sync British military planning was in relation to the true operational reality on the ground. British political elites in the form of Tony Blair and Secretary of Defense John Reid bear much responsibility for the decision to open up a military front in Helmand province while operations in Iraq continued placing extra enormous pressure on the British armed forces to try and sustain both commitments that were to develop into extremely difficult operational combat zones. However, Tony Blair in his memoirs suggests "the military chiefs, dismayed at the limits of what we could do in Iraq, were increasingly wanting to switch emphasis from Iraq to Afghanistan."[75] General Sir Mike Jackson, the Chief of the General Staff, reveals, "by the second half of 2005 it had become obvious that a much greater effort was required in Afghanistan."[76] The problem was that continuing operations in Iraq involving 8,000 troops with a new initial deployment of 3,500 troops[77] to Helmand in 2006 created "a 'perfect storm' of commitment over and above our resource capability."[78] The disconnection between British political elites and the potential for high intensity combat operations in Helmand province is perhaps encapsulated by John Reid's infamous statement at Kandahar airfield in March 2006 that "if we came for three years here to accomplish our mission and had not fired one shot at the end of it, we would be very happy indeed."[79] Within just over six months, British troops had fired around half a million bullets.[80] John Reid's statement, wittingly or unwittingly, captured the disconnection of the British political

establishment with the reality on the ground in Helmand province. In the harsh light of history, it is a breathtakingly naïve situational awareness, but his comments accurately captured the thinking in Whitehall, despite warnings from advance parties of British officers such as Lieutenant Colonel Henry Wolsley, whose initial assessment of Helmand was that "when the Paras [3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment] were going to arrive [in Helmand] in April or May 2006, there would be a reception party for them."[81] The failure of British political and military elites to accurately assess the dangers of sending around 3,000 British forces initially to Helmand province, a Pashtun heartland with strong links to the Taliban, the opium production center of Afghanistan, and an area of responsibility almost the size of Scotland placed extraordinary pressure on their armed forces. During the planning process for the new wider ISAF mission, of which the British deployment was an essential feature, the decision to choose Helmand occurred more as a result of accident, rather than as a result of a carefully considered process. It is interesting to note that the Commanding General of ISAF in 2006 was a British officer, General Sir David Richards, until recently Chief of the Defense Staff in the UK, so there was no shortage of a lack of influence on higher command. The original intention was to seek a wider role in Kandahar, but the Canadians took that role which left the British with the Helmand option. The strategic situation in Helmand was vague at best, but initial British operational strategy was based on a sound estimation of a realistic scope of activities. As Sean Rayment reveals, "the plan was for the UK to form part of a multinational Brigade, along with the Dutch and the Canadians. Each nation would be responsible for one of the country's southern provinces and British troops were allocated the task of pacifying and reconstructing Helmand."[82]

After some considerable time and effort, British military planners put forward a concept of operations based loosely on the "inkspot strategy"[83] in the successful counter-insurgency campaign in Malaya. According to Fergusson,

> the idea now was for the military to establish a secure zone in the center of Helmand between Lashkar Gah (the provincial capital), Gereshk (the second biggest town) and Camp Bastion in the west. [. . .] Civilian agencies, the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development (DFID) would then pour into this "development triangle."[84]

The problem was the plan was never implemented. Instead, British forces became located in fixed bases or the notorious platoon houses to the north of the area of responsibility located in towns such as Sangin, Musa Qala, Now Zad, and the Kajaki Dam locked in intense firefights with the Taliban. This mission creep has been best described by Colonel Stuart Tootal, Commanding Officer of 3 PARA in his book, *Danger Close*,[85] on

how the initial force package became sucked into static entanglements as they became scattered across northern Helmand defending places with names such as Sangin and Musa Qala. Quite frankly, the British armed forces became embroiled in a high-intensity counter-insurgency campaign in an assumed "quiet" province[86] and, as a consequence, operational planning had been based on an ad hoc reactive basis pretty much since 2006 onwards. Put simply, the British ended up engaged in some of the most intense fighting since the Korean War and very little development effort was possible. In addition, relationships between the military forces, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and DFID proved to be less than effective and not hugely "joined-up" on the ground.[87] Other factors compounded the state of affairs and the command structure was overly complex and frankly baroque with Colonel Tootal of the Paras reporting not to the overall commander of his brigade, Brigadier Ed Butler (designated Commander of British Forces or COMBRITFOR in Kabul), but to an outsider, Colonel Charlie Knaggs, who in turn was under the control of a Canadian Brigadier General, David Fraser, subordinate to an American Major General Ben Freakley. The unworkable nature of this unsatisfactory command arrangement inevitably provoked great tensions between the coalition partners, but particularly with regard Brigadier Butler, who was in charge of British forces in Helmand, but outside the US chain of command, and Major General Freakley, that almost famously led to a punch-up between the two senior operational commanders.[88] By deviating from the original strategy, of which questions still remain as to whether they had adequate resources to carry it out, British forces have found themselves in a reactive posture in which their efforts have been determined by the Taliban's seizure of the initiative and not the other way around. Notwithstanding the precariousness of the situation on the ground throughout 2006 and beyond, military elites have remained eerily and very publicly optimistic about progress in Helmand. It is captured well by the former British ambassador to Kabul at the time, Sherard Cowper-Coles, "we stuck at it because we wanted to believe our generals. Each year they assured us that, at last, they had the strategy and the resources they needed to do the job."[89] In truth, the chaotic intervention in Helmand province set the tone and parameters of the British military effort, not just for weeks and months, but for years, in essence, a strategy vacuum that consumed vast amounts of blood and treasure.

US/UK strategy toward Afghanistan since 2001 has suffered until recent years from the absence of any kind of grand strategy that stemmed to a large degree not only from US political elites failing to construct one, but also from the American way of planning for war. The preparations for the invasion of Iraq undoubtedly drew much attention away from the theater of operations and allowed the Taliban to reconstitute and recontest the strategic space with Afghanistan. This had profound implications not only for US strategy

but also for their principal coalition partners. The Afghan model emerged as a result of organic processes on the ground and not from a coherent plan produced within CENTCOM. Its remarkable successes in 2001 masked the genuine failings of the model to offer a long-term and sustainable strategy for Afghanistan, but this was not recognized by political and military elites based in the United States. British strategy, especially the very controversial decision to send forces to Helmand province, has been foundationally undermined by the failure of British political and military elites to acquire a realistic situational awareness of the state of affairs in Afghanistan and, as such, combined with decisions by theatre commanders to fix British forces in static outposts, has created a strategic imbroglio, which is only now being unraveled to a degree by recent massive US material support in Helmand province in the last few years. In sum, the current situation in Afghanistan was largely allowed to develop by US/UK and NATO forces that failed to foresee the fragility and the good fortune of the initial indecisive campaign against the Taliban and its implications for the future of the country.

Questions

1. To what extent was the emergence of the "Afghan model" a planned stroke of genius or a fortunate occurrence?
2. Does the "Afghan model" represent a new way of warfare that can be replicated in other theaters of operation?
3. What kind of victory did the United States win in Afghanistan in 2001?
4. How did the complex insurgency that consumes Afghanistan today emerge in the aftermath of the US military victory in 2001?
5. Explain the shortcomings of the British mission to Helmand province in 2006.

Notes

1. Richard B. Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr, "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model." *International Security,* 30, no. 3 (Winter 2005/2006): 124.
2. British soldiers have killed Taliban insurgents with bayonets in close quarter fighting. See Sean Rayment, *Into the Killing Zone: The Real Story from the Frontline in Afghanistan* (London: Constable, 2008), 226.
3. Tommy Franks used to favor the word "kinetic" a great deal. See Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 281.

4 A description attributed to former US Secretary of State Colin Powell cited in Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 8.
5 Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 19.
6 Robert Citino, *The German Way of Warfare: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 103.
7 Ibid., 32.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 149–150.
10 Ibid., 165–166.
11 Deborah Avant, "Political Institutions and Military Effectiveness: Contemporary United States and United Kingdom" in *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness*, eds, Risa A. Brooks and Elizabeth A. Stanley (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 87.
12 See Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 13.
13 See H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1998).
14 See Alastair Finlan, *The Gulf War 1991* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003), 32.
15 See Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 395–396 (Kindle Edition); Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011) (Kindle Edition); George Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Virgin Books, 2010), 198–200 (Kindle Edition).
16 Dick Cheney with Liz Cheney, *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2011), 344 (Kindle Edition).
17 Ibid., 345 (Kindle Edition).
18 Franks, *American Soldier*, 313–315.
19 Andres et al., "Winning with Allies," 134.
20 Pete Blaber, *The Mission, the Men and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2008), 202.
21 Gary C. Schroen, *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006), 290–291 (Explanation added).
22 Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 32.
23 This concept was elegantly put forward by Irving Janis—see Irving L. Janis, *GroupThink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982).
24 Janis, *GroupThink*, 9.
25 Norman Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 399.
26 Blaber, *The Mission, the Men and Me*, 154.
27 Ibid.

28 Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*, 400.
29 Ibid.
30 Alastair Finlan, *Special Forces, Strategy and the War on Terror: Warfare by Other Means* (London: Routledge, 2008), 10.
31 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 397.
32 Susan Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Forces* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1997), 7.
33 Thomas Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 9–10.
34 Franks served in Vietnam. One of his predecessors in charge of CENTCOM, General Schwarzkopf (another Vietnam veteran), also had a wary attitude to SOF.
35 Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*, 143.
36 Robin Moore, *Taskforce Dagger: The Hunt for Bin Laden* (London: Pan Books, 2004), 69.
37 Schroen, *First In,* 176 (Explanation added).
38 Franks, *American Soldier*, 313.
39 Lt. Col Christopher Haas, US Army Special Forces cited in Andres, Wills, and Griffith, "Winning with Allies," 146.
40 Ibid.
41 Stephen Biddle, "Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy." *Strategic Studies Institute* (November 2002), 40.
42 Andres, Wills, and Griffith, "Winning with Allies," 147.
43 Ibid.
44 Schroen, *First In*, 359.
45 Michael Smith, *Killer Elite: The Inside Story of America's Most Secret Special Operations Team* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2006), 226.
46 Robin Moore, 308.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Fred Kaplan, *Daydream Believers: How a Few Grand Ideas Wrecked American Power* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2008) (Kindle Edition).
50 Franks, *American Soldier*, 315.
51 Bush, *Decision Points*, 234 (Kindle Edition).
52 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 427 (Kindle Edition).
53 Rice, *No Higher Honour* (Kindle Edition).
54 Cheney with Cheney, *In My Time*, 369 (Kindle Edition).
55 Rice, *No Higher Honour* (Kindle Edition).
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 "On October 28, 2005, Scooter was indicted on one count of obstructing justice, two counts of perjury, and two of making false statements"—See Cheney with Cheney, *In My Time*, 408 (Kindle Edition). He was convicted on four of the five counts.
59 Schroen, *First In*, 359–360.
60 Charles Briscoe, Richard Kiper, James Schroder, and Kalev Sepp, eds, *U.S. Army Special Operations in Afghanistan* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 2006), 279.

61 Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (New York: Berkley Books, 2005), 375.
62 Stephen D. Biddle, "Allies, Airpower and Modern Warfare: The Afghan Model in Afghanistan and Iraq." *International Security*, 30, no. 3 (Winter 2005/2006): 171.
63 Kaplan, *Daydream Believers* (Kindle Edition).
64 Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan* (London: Hurst and Company, 2007).
65 Ibid., vii.
66 See Anthony Seldon with Peter Snowdon and Daniel Collings, *Blair Unbound* (London: Pocket Books, 2008) (Kindle Edition).
67 The initial deployment of the SAS was not a productive one as the Americans struggled to find a role for them (consistent with their own problems with SOF in general) and the first squadron was withdrawn from theater in November according to some sources – see Damien Lewis, *Bloody Heroes* (London: Century, 2006). The SBS had more involvement and the returning SAS became involved in various stiff fighting in Helmand and later around Tora Bora.
68 Ibid.
69 Tim Ripley, *Operation Enduring Freedom: America's Afghan War 2001 to 2002* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Aviation, 2011), 46.
70 Seldon, *Blair Unbound* (Kindle Edition)
71 See General Sir Mike Jackson, *Soldier* (London: Corgi Books, 2008), 346.
72 See Sean Rayment, *Into the Killing Zone*, 20.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., 21–24.
75 Tony Blair, *A Journey* (London: Hutchinson, 2010), 610 (Kindle Edition).
76 Jackson, *Soldier*, 445.
77 General Sir Richard Dannatt, *Leading from the Front* (London: Bantam Press, 2010) (Kindle Edition).
78 Ibid.
79 James Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan* (London: Bantam Press, 2008), 9.
80 Ibid.
81 Sandy Gall, *War against the Taliban: Why It All Went Wring in Afghanistan* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012) (Kindle Edition).
82 Rayment, *Into the Killing Zone*, 28.
83 Fergusson, *A Million Bullets*, 22.
84 Ibid., 23.
85 Stuart Tootal, *Danger Close* (London: John Murray, 2009).
86 Ibid., 38.
87 Gall, *War against the Taliban* (Kindle Edition).
88 Ibid.
89 Sherard Cowper-Coles, *Cables from Kabul* (London: HarperPress, 2011) (Kindle Edition).

CHAPTER FIVE

The Iraq puzzle

A "war of survival" is a first-order conflict that involves vital national interests at stake including the sanctity of the nation-state and its society if lost.

A "war of choice" is a second-order conflict in which vital interests are not at stake and if lost have no fundamental implications for the security of the state, aside from the material costs (blood and treasure) expended in the fighting.

The Iraq War of 2003 remains the most contentious military intervention into the affairs of a sovereign state in the modern era that continues to polarize debates and smolder in public forums. It is also somewhat of a puzzle in international affairs because the principal architects of the war have expended vast sums of capital with the US estimate alone for the costs of the Iraq campaign adding up to $3 trillion[1] for little gain. In addition, literally from the moment of declared "victory" onwards, the American concept of operations began to unravel in very short order. The consequences of the war have been profound. It has been estimated that almost 160,000 Iraqis have died since the invasion of 2003.[2] Over 4,000 American service personnel have been killed in the fighting along with almost 200 British soldiers.[3] The origins of the war can be traced precisely to numerous causal pathways, from decisions made by American political elites in Washington driven by domestic politics and an identifiable unifying ideology to victory syndrome in Afghanistan as well as an ill-informed executive branch. These elements were reinforced by British political elites who took a breathtaking decision in the face of unprecedented widespread public opposition to contribute to the military campaign, regardless of the costs, domestic and international. The planning and preparation for the campaign is almost unique in American history in view of the extraordinary levels of civilian interference in military

affairs. It stands out in terms of how civilian elites shaped a counter-cultural way of warfare for the United States that flew in the face of long-standing precedent. American and British military elites, however, played a significant part in the facilitation of the intervention in Iraq and contributed to a large extent in the creation of war plans that undermined traditional conceptions of conventional warfare. The cooperative interaction of political and military elites in Britain and United States created the conditions for the Iraq catastrophe that continues to bear implications at national, regional, and international levels to the present day.

Ideational origins of the war

The origins of the Iraq War of 2003 can be traced back to the end of the first Persian Gulf War of 1991 and highlight the role of "domestic politics and, in particular, special interests in the decision to go to war."[4] Operation Desert Storm was without a shadow of a doubt one of the most stunning military victories in the modern age when half a million US military personnel along with approximately 250,000 coalition partners[5] ejected the Iraqi armed forces out of Kuwait in a combined air and land campaign that lasted, in the latter case, just four days. Weeks of strategic bombing with some of the most advanced military equipment such as the F-117 Stealth Fighter cracked the most powerful military forces in the region with consummate ease and enabled the armor-heavy ground forces to reach and liberate Kuwait City in only 100 hours of operations.[6] The Gulf War of 1991 achieved all of its set military objectives and President George Bush (the father of George W. Bush) sensibly halted the military activities once the UN-agreed limits of the operation had been reached. For some, a minority of dissident voices within US political elites, this was a mistake because Saddam Hussein's regime survived, notwithstanding the disastrous defeat by coalition forces, and went on to repress the Shia resistance in the south of Iraq and the Kurds in the North whom the United States had encouraged to rebel.[7] The majority of the political elites in Washington disagreed. Gordon and Trainor provide an insight into the policy of the Bush administration in 1991 "that settled on a policy of economic sanctions, military containment, and regular United Nations inspections to dismantle Saddam's programs to develop nuclear, biological, and chemical arms."[8] Alongside of these efforts no-fly zones were established in northern and southern Iraq.[9] One of the key dissidents in the Bush Administration with links to special interests who was strongly in opposition to the policy was Paul Wolfowitz, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.[10] The significance of Wolfowitz's opposition to and obsession with Saddam Hussein and his regime would return to influence American foreign affairs almost a decade or so later.

Wolfowitz was very much a product of a particular pole of intellectual thought within the relatively new subject area of strategic studies that emerged in the aftermath of World War II, especially in the shadow of the atomic bomb. Two influential intellectual legacies dominated the field: one slightly to the left, stressed the classical tradition of strategy and drew wisdom from great strategists such as Carl von Clausewitz, emphasized the importance of history and the centrality of human agency in war – this pole was encapsulated in the ideas and writings of Bernard Brodie, the father of nuclear deterrence theory. The other, more right of center, placed a greater focus on hard calculations, statistical enquiry, and systems theories and coalesced around the work of Albert Wohlstetter, author of the influential article, "The Delicate Balance of Terror." As James Bamford reveals, "by the 1960s, Wohlstetter was becoming known as the intellectual godfather of Cold War hawks. He strongly opposed any form of détente or disarmament, and instead developed strategies not for passive deterrence but for actually fighting and winning both conventional and nuclear wars."[11]

Paul Wolfowitz would become Wohlstetter's graduate student in the 1960s at the University of Chicago and clearly owes his intellectual origins to the radical extreme ring-wing of strategic studies. By the mid-1990s, Wolfowitz along with other former protégés of Wohlstetter such as Richard Perle, for instance, would create a lobby group called "The Project for a New American Century" (PNAC), which espoused a neoconservative vision of the future. In 1998, PNAC sent a letter to President Clinton imploring him to "take 'regime change' in Iraq seriously"[12] and it was signed by people such as Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Armitage, and John Bolton[13] among the 18 signatories who would all find positions in the future Bush Administration of 2001. One of the remarkable features of the neoconservative movement, a special interests grouping, that would play an instrumental role in influencing the course of American foreign policy toward initiating a military campaign against Iraq in 2003 was the composition and orientation of many of its members. First, the majority were civilians who were heavily engaged in political lobbying. Second, many of the most vociferous proponents had very strong and, in some cases, very intimate links with an external state, Israel. As John Keegan explains prior to 2000, "although out of government, the neo-conservatives remained able to propagate their views, through such publications as the *Weekly Standard* and *Commentary*, a major organ of Jewish thought. Many of the neo-conservatives were Jewish; almost all were Zionist and pro-Israeli."[14]

Richard Perle, who would head the Defense Policy Advisory Board under Bush, Douglas Feith, who would work for Perle and Rumsfeld, as well as David Wurmser, another prominent neoconservative, worked in the past for the Likud Party and put forward a radical policy memorandum to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996 called "A Clean Break, a New Strategy for Securing the Realm."[15] According to Cockburn, it called

for "jettisoning the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and instead adopting a more aggressive attitude towards the Palestinians as well as pre-emptive military action against Lebanon and Syria."[16] The United States is a land of immigrants with the exception of the indigenous Native American people so it is inevitable that people with strong family connections to foreign lands and states will reach powerful positions within the government, but the problem emerges when loyalties are divided between them. The Israeli connection and influence in the US decision to wage war against Iraq has come under great scrutiny in recent years and two American political scientists, Professor John Mearsheimer and Professor Stephen Walt in their article and now book entitled, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*,[17] have "concluded that Jewish American lobbies and Israel played a decisive role in the decision of the Bush administration to go to war in Iraq."[18] To a very significant extent, Iraq was not a major threat to the interests of the United States at any stage in the run-up to war in 2003, but Iraq was one of Israel's major security concerns. This stemmed from Saddam's long-term support of the Palestinian people and, equally importantly, physical attack on Israel using Scud missiles during the Gulf War of 1991. While the conventional attacks themselves were of limited military utility with very little damage being done, the fact that Iraq could hit Israel with missiles and had possessed a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) capability in the past posed a significant existential threat to the Jewish state.

Taken together, these elements represented an exceptional state of affairs in US defense policy formulation. Civilian elites, in some cases, heavily influenced by their own convicted beliefs/ideology about America's place and position in world affairs and in others, interested in the well-being of another nation-state actively, promoted an explicit policy agenda: to start a war with Iraq. Bob Woodward describes Wolfowitz as the "intellectual godfather and fiercest advocate for toppling Saddam"[19] and notwithstanding opposition from other members of Bush's cabinet such as Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, "Wolfowitz was like a drum that would not stop."[20] Another perspective is provided by Richard Clarke, the former National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism, who during a high policy meeting the day after 9/11 to discuss options was "incredulous that we were talking about something other than getting al Qaeda. Then I realized with almost a sharp physical pain that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were going to try to take advantage of this national tragedy to promote their agenda about Iraq."[21]

The influence of the Iraq lobby provides an interesting study of how elite decision-making groups are swayed by a policy agenda over time and changing circumstances, notwithstanding that they might not be in the national interest. The Rumsfeld/Wolfowitz axis did not immediately win the argument after 9/11 for an attack on Saddam Hussein's regime and, consequently, priority was given to the Afghan theater of operations and

the fight against Al Qaeda and the Taliban. It was only when the military campaign appeared to be going well in Afghanistan from November 2001 onwards that attention returned to the Iraq agenda and planning formally started. Had the United States continued to struggle militarily in Afghanistan, the Iraq option would have been given far less time and attention, if any at all. The role of President George Bush was critical in shaping the American policy landscape toward generating a war with Iraq in 2003. His motivations for doing so remain somewhat open to speculation, even today, but the personal factor cannot be ignored. In 1993, Saddam Hussein, it has been alleged through Iraqi intelligence agencies, had tried to blow up George Bush's father on a visit to Kuwait City, but the plot failed and was discovered by the Kuwaiti police. Remarkably, the first time US officials were made aware of this attempt was through an "Arab-language newspaper in London" that one of them happened to be perusing.[22] The significance of the assassination attempt clearly had a marked effect on George Bush Jnr and, even in late 2002, the president was overheard to remark, "I am well aware [. . .] He tried to kill my Dad."[23] To what extent the Iraq War was a manifestation of a desire for personal revenge on behalf of the president or an attempt to prove himself to his father by fighting in the same theater of operation in which he had fought a successful campaign remains open to question. Remarkably, and perhaps this is an indicator of the state of their relationship, George Bush did not seek his father's counsel about going to war in Iraq[24] – a strange state of affairs in view of the latter's personal experience of war and success in the Gulf War of 1991. This suggests that the bond between father and youngest son was complex and without (or lost) the traditional nurturing legacy when offspring consult parents about subjects they know little about. Interestingly, Bush, like Rumsfeld, did seize on the issue of Iraq in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Richard Clarke reveals,

> Later, on the evening of the 12th [September 2001], I left the Video Conferencing Center and there, wandering alone around the Situation Room, was the President. He looked like he wanted something to do. He grabbed a few of us and closed the door to the conference room. "Look," he told us, "I know you have a lot to do and all . . . but I want you, as soon as you can, to go back over everything, everything. See if Saddam did this. See if he's linked in any way . . ."
>
> I was once again taken aback, incredulous, and it showed. "But, Mr. President, al Qaeda did this."
>
> "I know, I know, but . . . see if Saddam was involved. Just look. I want to know any shred . . ."[25]

Clearly, the Iraq factor was at the forefront of the president's mind in the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy. It had become an important part of his

family's history and, consequently, George Bush's interest coincided with that of the neocons and the Vice President, Dick Cheney. Together these elements would contribute to creating a favorable environment for the call to arms against Iraq to gain momentum within American political elite circles from late November 2001 onwards.

US/UK civil-military relations and planning for the Iraq War

There is a temptation to describe the extraordinary amount of civilian interference in the US and, to a lesser extent in the United Kingdom, in the military planning process for Operation Iraqi Freedom as unique and to lay much of the blame at the door of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). However, this very same situation had occurred before in the recent past, most notably during the Vietnam War. One of the sharpest critics of that campaign and, ironically, a participant as a successful junior commander in Iraq during the post-Saddam occupation phase, Colonel H. R. McMaster in his best seller, *Dereliction of Duty*, described the approach of another hands-on American manger of war, Robert S. McNamara, who as Secretary of Defense was "convinced that traditional military conceptions of the use of force were irrelevant to contemporary strategic and political realities."[26] The thrust of McMaster's analysis blames flawed human agency in the form of the president and his top civilian and military advisors for the disaster of the Vietnam War.[27] This interpretation contains without a shadow of a doubt many obvious truths and it is also mirrored by Adrian Lewis in his condemnation of the Iraq War that "the planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom was criminally inadequate. The conduct of the war in Iraq was primarily a function of Rumsfeld's technological vision of war. Rumsfeld combined the worst attributes of the Secretaries of Defense McNamara and Johnson. He was too arrogant to listen to professional advice."[28] Approximately 40 years, nearly two generations, separates the decisions to intervene in Vietnam and Iraq, yet the occurrence of two similar flawed campaigns, albeit under very different circumstances and contexts, indicates that *sui generis* explanations or attributions to key personalities fail to provide convincing reasons for the startling repetition. Equally the weak areas in the American approach to the war in Iraq were mirrored to a degree in the preparations of their principal coalition partner, the British armed forces. John Kampfner provides a snapshot of the problems besetting British commanders in late 2002,

> Britain's military chiefs were becoming agitated. [. . .] At the Pentagon detailed planning had already taken place for a potential war. Rumsfeld

had, as a contingency, set an informal target date of 15 February 2003 for full deployment of US forces. Nothing like that was being done in the UK because the politicians were prevaricating.[29]

This was not a peculiar or particular crisis of American and British approaches to war in relation to an extraordinary event, but rather something more pervasive, long established, and systemic within both countries: it was a crisis of the West's way of organizing social violence on a state scale.

Social systems, capitalism, and war in the twenty-first century

The planning involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom draws a sharp lens on how nations and the broader social order that encompass them shape approaches to making war. The connections between how societies are organized, how they accrue power, and how they apply it in war are often disaggregated in modern literature as they appear to encompass areas that are essentially distinct and tackled by diverse fields such as sociology, political science, and strategic studies to name just a few subject areas that rarely embrace interdisciplinary approaches. Academic disciplines in the same manner as specific military institutions have rigidly demarked boundaries and trespassers are rarely welcomed. A classical sociological approach to the preparation for the Iraq War, and to a degree the Vietnam War as well, provides a much fuller explanation for why British and American planning was so flawed. Max Weber draws an intimate connection between the development of Western capitalism and its relationship with religion, especially Protestantism that is the traditional dominant religion of Britain and the United States, and how it has shaped and influenced the development of social systems. According to Weber, "the peculiar modern Western form of capitalism has been, at first sight, strongly influenced by the development of technical possibilities. Its rationality is to-day essentially dependent on the calculability of the most important technical factors."[30] The ability to acquire accurate calculations and statistics about all aspects of life has increasingly gained over time a form of social power that is manifested in the seemingly trivial aspects of life such as the measurement of weights through to essential aspects of state and international affairs such as participation of global financial markets. Max Weber realized at the turn of the twentieth century when his major thesis was published that capitalism combined with the working ethic or asceticism of Protestantism was creating a powerful social order in its own right:

The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life,

> and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which to-day determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt. In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment". But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage.[31]

The Weberian caveat concerning the inherent danger of the capitalist-dominated social system is extremely apt in the modern age. The "iron cage" encompasses not just economic activity at the personal level, but equally how modern states organize their social power in relation to warfare as well. The innate power of the capitalist system and the ability to calculate/accrue statistics have been provoking a profound impact on the prosecution of warfare, but particularly so in contemporary times. It contributed to the development of mass warfare and facilitated the birth of new, more accurate, and deadly technologies that began to be witnessed on the battlefield in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. It reached its apogee in World War I when the social power of states to organize and supply the deployment of mass armies in combination with machine guns and modern artillery created strategic impasse on the European continent for four long and bloody years. However, World War II took the organizing and calculating ability of states taken to new levels with the production of the "Atomic Bomb" and, from a Western perspective, the importance of statistics/quantitative analysis in intelligence in cracking the Enigma code (the top secret German cipher) with the earliest forms of computer and operational research. In view of the late entry of the United States into the war and the fact that the European campaign was won predominantly in the East, these elements would have negligible effects on the outcome of the war, but they possessed enormous implications for the post-war period.

The significance of the Weberian caveat for the planning, preparation, and prosecution of war for the West was manifold. First, the enhanced power of information and communication technologies for civilian political elites tipped the balance of advantage in relation to military elites on campaigns in their favor. World War I was the last war in which generals would prosecute wars in theaters with relatively autonomy in relation to operational strategy. It was perhaps no accident that Winston Churchill in World War II, for example, one of the first Western leaders to experience such new found social power, would hire and fire senior British Army generals in the Western Desert campaign in North Africa on a seemingly worrying regular basis.[32] Intelligence-gathering technologies

provided the prime minister with a more hands-on birds-eye perspective than any political leader in British history had ever possessed. Indeed, such an approach in the previous war would have been unthinkable. Most importantly, it enabled a greater aggregation of social power concerning what was traditionally a highly specialized and jealously guarded aspect of the state. This situation was mirrored even more in the United States that possessed vastly more computation and statistical power than the United Kingdom. Increasingly, civilian elites would have access to information that traditionally only military elites would enjoy and it blurred the lines of responsibility between the two heavily in favor of the former. Knowledge is power and information is the supreme social asset in a state.

The development of modern computers and information technologies has taken this state of affairs to new levels. The traditional autonomy and mystique of the military realm of social practice has become far more transparent to civilian political elites through the ability to generate statistical breakdowns of all facets of military affairs, from manpower to weapons and their general application. The information technology revolution of the 1980s has accelerated this trend to an exponential degree and has profoundly altered traditional command and control arrangements of military forces by political elites while on operations. Computers, processing power, the internet, and memory capacity have played a very important part in this development. The sheer speed with which this technology took off and its pervasiveness in society are best captured by McInnes who reveals "in the 1970s, there were perhaps 50,000 computers worldwide. In 1981, IBM introduced the first PC. Within fifteen years, the use of PCs had become ubiquitous in the West, with upward of 150 million in use worldwide."[33] Compounding and facilitating this trend has been the emergence of the military-industrial complex (the so-called Iron Triangle)[34] in the post-war period means that civilian elites are influencing and, in some cases, determining the very weapons systems and weapons that the military will use. This phenomenon in the United States has been best described by Adrian Lewis who argues "Congress controls the purse. It controls military expenditures and weapons procurement. In the 1950s an 'iron triangle' emerged of Congressmen and their constituents – the American people – the military and civilian leaders in the Department of Defense, and defense contractors."[35] This situation is even more accentuated in the United Kingdom and perhaps best described by the relatively recent decision to purchase the American Apache attack helicopter, a well-proven system. As Lewis Page mischievously notes of the project that "an entire new production line was set up here in Britain by Westland, in order to make a grand total of sixty-seven helos. [. . .] each bird cost the British taxpayer nearly £40 million, Israel ordered twenty-four Apaches direct from America in 1999, paying less than £12 million per helo."[36] This state of affairs captures well how commercial and political interests can dovetail

to turn an ostensibly simple purchase into a far more complex and costly operation.

The impact of the military-industrial complex on both Britain and the United States has led to situations where the development of certain types of military equipment has taken "on a life of their own, separate from that intended by the service [military]."[37] The upshot has been an increasing accumulation of power within civilian political elites concerning not just weapon systems, but also force structures within their own armed forces. Over time, military organizations may well end up with force structures and equipment that are inapposite for the strategic environment that they face because capitalist market forces have played a deterministic role in the procurement process of what traditionally should have been an exclusive sphere. This has led to patently absurd situations in modern warfare and this was no more apparent than in the Vietnam War. As one observer notes of the conflict,

> it did not matter that multimillion dollar aircraft were being used to attack an old truck moving down the Ho Chi Minh trail, a task that could have been better performed by a slow moving World War II P-51 Mustang. The American force structure was not based on the exigencies of war [. . .] but the exigencies of the marketplace.[38]

The Western interpretation of capitalism had led by the mid-twentieth century to an extraordinary consolidation of social power among civilian political elites that encroached heavily on areas that were considered in a traditional sense to be the prerogative of military elites. This trend would accelerate and grow, not with the resistance of the military, but in many cases with their open support, for many of those who reached the highest levels of the armed forces would – in retirement – move into high-ranking positions within the defense industry, the so-called revolving door, a phenomenon that is common to both Britain and the United States, especially in the present day.

Technology was very much a facilitator of the increasing civilianization of military affairs in the West and permitted political elites to have a much greater deterministic role in the application of military force. Air power was the progenitor of hands-on civilian involvement, control, and often direction of social violence on the battlefield. By the Vietnam War, the power of civilian political elites reached the stage whereby in terms of air power, "Washington decided on which targets to attack, the number and types of planes to employ, the tonnage and types of munitions to drop, the date and time of the attack, and sometimes the direction of approach to the target area."[39] This extraordinary interference in military affairs by civilian political elites has been enhanced greatly by the development of precision-guided munitions that can now permit aircraft or land vehicles to target an

enemy position with unheard of levels of accuracy using either wire/laser or satellite (global positioning system or GPS) technologies. In combination with satellite communications systems that allow real time video and audio discussion with military commanders in the field worldwide and tracking systems, policy makers can watch, interact, and influence their military forces from the small unit level upwards. As such, political elite control over military affairs has never been greater in the West. By the time of the twenty-first century, social practices related to war making had changed profoundly. Increasingly interference by political elites in military affairs or the non-professionalization of war/the dominance of amateurs captured well in modern terms by the word "spectators"[40] in the direction of military operations had become a hallmark of British and, especially the American, experience.

The Rumsfeld factor, war planning, and Operation Iraqi Freedom

The role and influence of Donald Rumsfeld in the military planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom stands out as a prime causal factor of many of the shortfalls that beset the coalition forces during and after the invasion of Iraq. In stark contrast to Operation Enduring Freedom, the proposed invasion of Iraq in November 2001 had an existing war plan to deal with this contingency. It was called OPLAN 1003–98 and it had been heavily revised in the aftermath of Operation Desert Fox in 1998 when Central Command (CENTCOM) under General Anthony Zinni, Franks' predecessor, had realized that the limited strikes against Saddam's regime had caused far more damage than anticipated and regime collapse may well be a likely occurrence in the near future.[41] Such a scenario posed the danger of how would CENTCOM deal with an imploded Iraq and the implications for close allies in the region and their borders. According to Gordon and Trainor, "Zinni developed the plan further. CENTCOM's OPLAN 1003–98 called for three corps, some 380,000 troops in all. [. . .] Their job would not only be to dispatch Saddam's Republican Guard [. . .] maintain law and order, and, in general to prevent chaos."[42] This plan was well known to General Franks as he served with General Zinni in CENTCOM at the time as the commanding officer of the Third Army[43] and his initial plans followed this template relatively closely with roughly, though slightly less, the same number of troops involved.[44] To some extent, a mild tinkering with the plan made sense because under normal circumstances years of preparation would go into producing such a critical document in which thousands of lives would be at stake.[45] The first briefing of this amended plan to the Secretary of Defense occurred in early December. Cockburn

provides an interesting overview of how the presentation by General Gregory Newbold, Director of Operations on the Joint Staff, especially the numbers of troops was received by the Secretary of Defense who retorted, "absurd," [. . .] "We don't need nearly that many" and suggested a figure of "no more than 125,000" that left the general "stunned" because "the group was in a position of fixing numbers of troops before there was a strategy in place to use them."[46] In his memoirs, the Secretary of Defense notes of the original plan that "it was a stale, slow-building, and dated plan that Iraqi forces would expect. A decade had come and gone since the Gulf War, yet the war plan seemed to have been frozen in time."[47] In truth, this assessment was hardly accurate because OPLAN 1003–98 was updated in 1998 (hence the designator "98"), just three years earlier, but its principles rested soundly on what had worked in the past and as such it was a sensible course of military action. Nevertheless, it was starkly out of kilter with Rumsfeld's transformational agenda to change how the Department of Defense operated bureaucratically, but also on the battlefield. As some commentators have noted "when he arrived at the Pentagon, Rumsfeld made clear that his goal was nothing less than to remake the U.S. military to fashion a leaner and more lethal force."[48] The dominating personality of Rumsfeld combined with his desire for radical change acted as a powerful independent variable within the planning cycle for the Iraq invasion. His presence via representatives working directly for the OSD was felt everywhere including in the planning cell at MacDill Air Force Base where CENTCOM was preparing the attack options.[49] This unusual setup enabled Rumsfeld and his closest aides such as Feith and Wolfowitz to have intimate access to the unfolding plan at the earliest stages of the evolution process, but this situation was not sustainable as the constant probing of the plan, based on the information leaked to them directly from MacDill, placed CENTCOM planners in an impossible situation. Eventually the OSD representatives in CENTCOM left the planning cell in late spring 2002.[50]

Effects-based operations are military actions, usually air power, to generate a specific strategic effect on vital centers of gravity to generate radical change in an opponent's behavior. It is often associated with the idea of "rapid dominance" over an enemy.

The most significant effect of American political elites on the preparation for the war with Iraq concerned the decision to reject the long-standing war plan of attack that had been "on the shelf" in CENTCOM for many years. By discarding a plan that had consumed a great deal of intellectual effort and thought over the years, it drew a sharp focus on the planning, leadership, and strategy skills of General Tommy Franks to develop a

new one that suited the tastes of the Secretary of Defense in a very short space of time. The role of personalities in complex organizations such as military institutions becomes critical once deviations from established patterns and routines of thinking are established. With Rumsfeld insisting on radical change, the onus was placed on the leadership of CENTCOM to innovate rapidly. But it was innovation within fixed parameters that were ultimately determined by the Secretary of Defense. For Franks, this was an extraordinarily difficult situation because it placed the spotlight firmly on him and his qualities as a military strategist. However, this aspect of abilities has been sharply questioned in the poor post-war environment of the invasion. According to some of his critics, "Franks considered himself an innovator, and had fashioned a unique idiom that was part military theory, part country. Franks liked to talk about 'strategic exposure' and 'functional competency.'"[51] A window on Franks' thinking about the most challenging aspect of military affairs is revealed in his memoirs when he sets out his "basic grand strategy."[52] The problem, however, was that grand strategy should not, and actually was not, part of his remit: it was something political elites deal with. What Franks set out or described as his grand strategy was sadly nothing of the sort. It was at most an ad hoc mixture with little sense of priority of military activities or what were described as "Lines of Operation"[53] against aspects of the Iraqi regime, termed as "slices"[54] formed into a matrix with "the Lines as rows with the Slices as columns."[55] At the intersections of the lines were "starbursts" which "represented points of focus we would use to develop the specifics of a detailed plan."[56] In terms of lines of operations, the hierarchy is revealing:

- OPERATIONAL FIRES
- SOF OPERATIONS
- OPERATIONAL MANEUVER
- INFORMATION OPS
- UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE/SUPPORT OPPOSITION GROUPS
- POLITICAL-MILITARY
- CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS[57]

The emphasis on operational fires reveals the tactical mindset[58] that characterized Franks as a military professional. For Franks, firepower and speed—one of his pet mantras was "speed kills"[59]—were all-important ontological foundations of his thinking. The firepower emphasis is hardly surprising for an office that had spent his entire career in the artillery branch of the US Army. The stress placed on SOF operations can be accounted

for by the startling and unexpected success of these units in Afghanistan. The rest of the list is interesting in isolation, but meaningless without any form of interconnection or interrelationship. Ironically, Franks does make reference to Clausewitz and his notion of centers of gravity[60] in relation to the slices, but the great strategist would have struggled to see parallels with his own teachings in view of such a geometric approach to strategy that are more akin to Jomini's style.[61] The slices themselves are also a window on his thinking:

- LEADERSHIP
- INTERNAL SECURITY/REGIME INTELLIGENCE
- WMD INFRASTRUCTURE/R&D
- REPUBLICAN GUARD/SPECIAL REPUBLICAN GUARD FORCES
- SELECTED REGULAR ARMY FORCES
- TERRITORY (SOUTH, NORTH, WEST)
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- CIVILIAN POPULATION
- COMMERCIAL AND DIPLOMATIC LEVERAGE[62]

The hierarchy of the slices is also revealing with a fixation on the Iraqi leadership, its internal security apparatus, WMD, and military forces before considering the most important aspects of all—Iraqi society—that is at the bottom of the list. The order of the "centers of gravity" reveals a poor appreciation that by invading a sovereign state that the people of that state would be critical issue concerning the outcome of the campaign. It is a remarkable reversal of the Clausewitizian trinity, "the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government."[63] Instead, Franks "strategic" priorities mirror the obsession of the Bush administration with Saddam Hussein. The explicit cooperation of US military elites with the radical new vision of war expounded by political elites empowered a hotchpotch approach to war planning in relation to the proposed Iraq adventure. Rumsfeld's personal desire to radically alter the war plan to invade Iraq simply could not have succeeded without the full support of the US military elites and, in particular, General Franks at CENTCOM. It was not a question of civilian political elites playing an all-encompassing deterministic role in the force package and strategy to be used, but rather a joint effort or a cooperative venture between a critical military decision maker and his political master. This state of affairs is revealed in Franks' own impression of the original plan, that it needed changing at a foundational

level with regard to basic ideas about the quality of the opposition. In his memoirs, General Franks admits during one of his many briefings, "I noted that we'd trimmed planned force levels from 500,000 troops to around 400,000. But even that was still way too large, I told the Secretary. 'This is not 1990. The Iraqi military today is not the one we faced in 1991. And own forces are much different. [. . .] We need to refine our assumptions.'"[64] The plan of attack against Iraq went through a variety of different versions and, with the exception of the original Zinni formulation, the vast majority of them were recipes for military ineffectiveness. Much of the cause for the changes in the plan revolved around two key factors: the first was numbers with Rumsfeld insisting on a smaller package and the second concerned deployment with again opposition to a Gulf War I-style lengthy approach.[65] One of the earliest versions was called *Generated Start* and it would take 60 days to deploy the force package comprised of three divisions initially, later almost six, of nearly 275,000 troops.[66] This was, however, still too big and slow in terms of deployment time for Rumsfeld.[67] By late spring of 2002, a new version called *Running Start* emerged, alongside the old plan, in which land force numbers at the start of the campaign, which would be initiated by a long bombing offensive, would be very small "a 2,000 man Marine Expeditionary Unit and two Army Brigades"[68] and increased in size as the campaign got underway. By late autumn 2002, another version, the *Hybrid*, started to develop that was a compromise between the two earlier versions with a shorter initial bombing campaign with much larger troop numbers (20,000) at the outset with a pipeline of reinforcements of tens of thousands flowing continuously for up to 125 days.[69] Ironically, in a cart before the horse scenario, the White House set out the goals of the campaign in mid-August, long after the planning had begun.[70]

The planning process for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the tug and pull between civilian political elites and key military decision makers, was in itself a recipe for military disaster. The acquiescence of CENTCOM to demands concerning troop level numbers and the rapidity of what could be achieved in a short space of time merely papered over military truisms and hard-won experience of military affairs over the last century of operations. To a large extent, it was counter-cultural and despite elements within US military elites raising questions over what was being planned, their objections were ignored by CENTCOM. An illustration of CENTCOM's attitude to the concerns by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) is provided by the Deputy Commander of CENTCOM who notes, "as the weeks approached, we came closer to a version acceptable to everyone. That is, except the Joint Chiefs. Once again, they were unhappy with the plan." Their concerns stemmed from the fact that "it was unprecedented," but the response from General Franks was "tough shit."[71] US military elites were much divided over the plans that were emanating from CENTCOM over the proposed invasion of Iraq. Perhaps the most telling criticism of the entire plan seeped

out from the Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, who when asked about how many troops would be required for the occupation of Iraq from the Senate Armed Forces Committee in February 2003 stated a figure of "several hundred thousand soldiers,"[72] a number that had been worked out for him by historians within the Army who looked at examples such as Germany and Japan among others.[73] The number quoted by Shinseki differed markedly from OSD numbers that envisaged a legacy force of around 30,000 by the summer of 2003.[74] These divisions at the highest levels of the US command structure were also apparent to their principal coalition partner, the United Kingdom. The former head of the British Army, General Sir Mike Jackson, noted in his memoirs, "Rumsfeld is one of those most responsible for the current situation in Iraq. He rejected the advice given to him by his generals."[75] It was particularly difficult at times for the British decision makers to get a clear view of what was happening in Washington in the early stages of the military planning. Even as late as April 2002, a key British participant records that the Chief of the Defense Staff explained to Tony Blair that "apart from Rumsfeld, there were only four or five people who were really on the inside track,"[76] which indicates the small size of the top military planning inner circle in the United States at the time concerning Iraq. Even the most senior British officer in CENTCOM found "Tommy Franks was difficult to read because he believed they were planning something for later in the year, maybe New Year."[77] This state of affairs was highly surprising, but indicative of the unusual planning process involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The sharp differences of opinion between CENTCOM and the JCS pointed toward systemic failings within the US military establishment concerning the conduct of war. This was not a recent phenomenon and some analysts[78] highlight its origins in the National Security Act of 1947, which created among various agencies that include the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Department of Defense and accentuated the competitive drive between the three services that was perceived as having a negative effect on operations, especially during the Vietnam War. The Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986 was part of a reform movement to encourage a more joint approach among the three services, but one of the key aspects of the new legislation was to strengthen the position of the Chairman of the JCS. According to Lewis, under this new setup, "thus the Chairman's military advice to the President was no longer circumscribed by the opinions of the other members of the Joint Chiefs." In addition, "the Chairman was not in the chain of command. It still went from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the Unified and Specified Commanders."[79] With General Richard Myers as Chairman of the JCS, an officer Senator John McCain once described as being "incapable of expressing an independent view,"[80] Donald Rumsfeld as Defense Secretary and General Franks as commander of CENTCOM (who resented the input of his own military superiors), the

US higher command system failed. In essence, the voices, opinions, and wisdom of American military elites, through systemic and personality flaws, were either ignored or simply excluded from critical policy and planning formulation concerning Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The failings in the US system at the highest levels of national and regional command were potentially catastrophic for the forthcoming invasion of Iraq because the Hybrid version or "iteration," as Franks liked to call it,[81] of the attack plan was unworkable. In the same manner as a car that has been primed with too little fuel, the light attack forces proposed for the invasion of Iraq would have run out of gas a substantial way outside of Baghdad, which they did to a degree. Nevertheless, US Army culture did provide an inadvertent and endogenous solution to the command crisis with the appointment of a very talented operational officer, General David McKiernan, a "trusted" officer of General Shinseki,[82] as the Coalition Forces Land Component Commander (CFLCC) around six months before the attack took place. To the new commander, the plan created by Franks, CENTCOM, and Rumsfeld contained huge risks due to the small size of initial forces and therefore a larger and more robust force package would be required to make the high-risk approach work. According to Gordon and Trainor's research, McKiernan requested stronger forces from the outset,

> namely the entire 3rd Infantry Division, the Army's 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment, as well as a CH-47 helicopter battalion. He also wanted the 5th and 7th Marine Regimental Combat teams to fill out Major General Jim Mattis's 1st Marine Division, and a large complement of the 3rd Marine Air Wing.[83]

Alongside of these augmentations to the fighting strength of the invasion force, McKiernan recommended sensible alterations to the command arrangements such as having both three-star command headquarters in theater at the start of the campaign,[84] rather than at a later stage. Having two key headquarters turn up on the battlefield after hostilities had been joined raises searching questions about the operational planning stage being formulated in CENTCOM as it had the potential to generate considerable confusion in terms of command and control under the stress of combat. McKiernan's influence was felt beyond just land operations and his suggestion to scrap the 16-day air offensive before the land campaign and have the two offensives start almost simultaneously was also accepted.[85] The only inadvertent advantage the American assault would have stemmed from the widespread perception that the invasion would be a copy of Desert Storm with a prolonged bombing campaign preceding a land offensive. By compressing the air and land campaign, McKiernan was squeezing perhaps the only significant initiative out of a poor set of inherited circumstances. For a few hours, perhaps days if they were lucky, the Iraqi defense forces

might not realize the true intent of the initial operations. In the final assessment, the influence of this key commander turned what was patently a recipe for military disaster into a workable proposition that would have just enough strength, depending on the incompetence of the enemy, to achieve its objectives. US army culture had wittingly or unwittingly found a last-minute endogenous counter to the failings in its higher command system. The absence of significant Rumsfeldian opposition to these radical amendments to the plan can only be speculated upon, from not being able to interfere at the very last minute of planning to pure political realpolitik: Rumsfeld's position depended heavily on success and so did his new vision of warfare. The irony was, as pointed out by major critics of the campaign that the final plan or Cobra II, as it was called, "did not represent the radical revolution in warfare promised by Rumsfeld's doctrine of transformation."[86] Nevertheless, it was still a highly anorexic force package that would pay the price for its thinness at various stages of the campaign itself, but more importantly in the aftermath of the toppling of Saddam's regime.

Tinkering with the TPFDL

The interference of political elites in the war planning for the invasion of Iraq went much further than just the direction of operational strategy and force packages, but also affected the all-important logistical underpinnings of the expedition. Organizing modern armies for warfare is an extraordinary complex task and, particularly so, for the United States. Since the early twentieth century and the widespread introduction of reliable multi-shot weapons, especially machine guns and artillery, the logistics involved in fighting has been a stupendous task. As armies moved into the missile age and with the introduction of assault rifle technologies such as the AK47 and American M16 the consumption of ammunition has risen exponentially. In the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the Falklands Conflict of 1982, armed forces in both Egypt and Britain had either run out of ammunition or run very low on stocks in relatively short campaigns. The latter armed forces were renowned for its parsimoniousness concerning ammunition usage but even it ended up with stocks running low by the end of the South Atlantic campaign in 1982. It has been estimated that by the time the Argentine forces surrendered, the Royal Navy, for example, had "'barely enough ammunition left for a further two days' bombardment, and further supplies weeks away."[87] For the US armed forces, an effective yet quite swollen system of logistics was encapsulated by a process known as the time-phased forces deployment list or TPFDL which is "a voluminous document describing the inventory of forces that are to be sent into battle, the sequence of their deployment, and the deployment of logistical

support."[88] As an organizational tool, the TPFDL was a critical system of management that had proved to be very effective in the past. However, Rumsfeld decided to tinker with this vital piece of the American military establishment – an extraordinary and reckless intervention by a member of the political elite. According to Seymour Hersh when the TPFDL was unveiled to the Secretary of Defense, it was not well received because it was "too big."[89] His sources indicated that Rumsfeld "insisted" on a smaller package and "further stunned the Joint Staff by insisting that he would control the timing and flow of Army and Marine troops to the combat zone. [. . .] He, and not the generals, would decide which unit would go when and where."[90]

The TPFDL situation perhaps captures the dangers and limits to civilian intervention in military affairs because Rumsfeld's interference threatened the logistical heartbeat of the entire campaign. The acceptance of a combatant commander to this state of affairs was extraordinary. The upshot of the Rumsfeld factor concerning this very important aspect of the American military planning system has been best described by the official history of the US Army that "to many a guardsman and reservist, the result seemed to be chaos, with soldiers mobilized in accordance with the TPFDL waiting idly for weeks and months, rushing overseas only to find they had not been time-phased with the arrival of their equipment."[91] Why Rumsfeld tinkered with this essential component of the US way of fighting remains open to speculation. His background in the business sector is revealing and, as CEO of G.D. Searle in the late 1970s, he partially turned the company around through "aggressive downsizing."[92] Whether he thought the application of a commercial sector business approach to military affairs would make them more efficient is a moot point, but war is a horribly inefficient process and business models rarely succeed in an environment in which key employees are often taken out of the equation through death or injury. Cockburn provides a very revealing description of Rumsfeld in full flow dealing with the TPFDL,

> he would pore over the three-ring binders presented by the staff, ruminating on whether a particular unit really needed that size motor pool, or that much ammunition. 'He abandoned the system,' said General Van Riper. 'He was striking out National Guard companies. He confused acronyms. It was chaos.'[93]

One justification for why Rumsfeld interfered with this vital aspect of military planning is put forward by Condoleezza Rice who suggests that political considerations demanded an unusual buildup of military forces away from the "neat packages, with the troops and their equipment moving together."[94] Her memoirs note, "Don, sensitive to the President's concern that the military preparations not outstrip the pace of diplomacy,

deliberately delinked those elements and tried to slow everything down. That was frustrating to the uniformed military."[95] If this was the case, then a spotlight is drawn on the functional competencies of President Bush and his chief advisors for not realizing fully the implications of their actions on military effectiveness. However, this was not a unique situation peculiar to the United States. In Britain, a similar set of circumstances, of political leaders not wanting to be seen to be playing the war card before diplomacy had ended, created equally pressing logistical issues for their military forces in the field. According to General Sir Mike Jackson, "the main problem was that political decision-making had left too little time for the Defense Logistic Organization to equip every soldier with desert camouflage clothing and with the latest body armor."[96] In other words, the prevarication of British politicians concerning essential military preparations meant that some soldiers would not have vital life-saving equipment such as relevant camouflage or body armor when they ordered them into battle. By the turn of the twenty-first century, the interaction between American political and military elites had reached crisis point and the scandal over the TPFDL perhaps reveals the limitation of civilian interference in matters that should be left to the professionals. The logistical system was a major source of weakness in the Iraq campaign and much of the blame and the confusion lie squarely with the interference of Donald Rumsfeld. The failure of military elites to protect the TPFDL draws a harsh spotlight on the commander of CENTCOM but also the Chairman of the JCS for allowing such a dangerous set of circumstances to arise and be tolerated.

The processes involved in the planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom were highly unusual, and the levels of civilian interference, but especially in the United States, were at times simply breathtaking. For the US armed forces that supplied the bulk of the forces and would engage in the majority of the fighting, the combination of top-level tinkering by the Secretary of Defense combined with a combatant commander who confused grand strategy with operational strategy created a very risky planning environment. Operation Iraqi Freedom would be a partial test of Rumsfeld's transformation agenda that was predicated purely around achieving battlefield success without much consideration of the wider political and social consequences that provided the all-encompassing environment in which the fighting would take place. To some degree, the absence of a clear political vision and strong management by the upper echelons of the government, particularly in the United States, but equally so in the United Kingdom, notwithstanding their junior partner status, permitted a delinking of military effort with the overall objective. The obvious flaws in the Rumsfeldian/Franks conception of war were highlighted in the most bald manner by nonmilitary experts, not least of which was Condoleezza Rice, who in the run-up to the hostilities had a very interesting three-way exchange with the president and vice president to point out a fundamental failing. Her contribution was "'you don't have

a northern strategy, and the Pentagon owes you one.' The Vice President immediately objected, letting it be known that the President should trust Don and the generals to do the military planning."[97] This state of affairs occurred after Turkey refused to allow coalition forces, originally designated to the British contingent,[98] access and transit rights, which became clearly apparent by early 2003. Rice also raised the issue of "rear-area security" for the vulnerable supply lines as US forces merely raced to Baghdad, but "failed to get a workable plan for the President."[99] These points were not merely minor issues, but fundamental flaws in the overall plan of attack that even the most junior military officer would have been expected to recognize before engaging in battle. For the British armed forces too, these shortcomings would profoundly affect their scope of operations and ultimately decide long-term mission success in Iraq. In addition, the British armed forces were beset by the challenge of leaving everything, especially the preparations and vital logistics, to the last minute to fulfill political expediency. For both US and UK fighting personnel, much would depend on the enemy providing a wide amount of latitude and incompetence on the battlefield to enable such a weak plan of attack to achieve its ambitious goals of changing a regime and occupying a vast country in the harsh and unforgiving environment of the Middle East.

Questions

1. Is international legitimacy vital to military operations in the twenty-first century?
2. Was the regime of Saddam Hussein a fundamental threat to the United States in 2003?
3. What was innovative about Operation Iraqi Freedom?
4. Do effects-based operations work? Discuss in relation to Iraq in 2003 and/or the Lebanon conflict of 2006.
5. Assess the role of Donald Rumsfeld in the planning and preparation of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Notes

1. David A. Lake, "Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory: Assessing Rationalist Explanations of the Iraq War." *International Security,* 35, no. 3 (Winter 2010/2011): 15.
2. The best source for these figures is the Iraq Body Count Survey. See website, accessed June 10, 2012, http://www.iraqbodycount.org.

3 The actual figures are 4,486 US and 179 UK service personnel. See icasualties website, accessed June 10, 2012, http://www.icasualties.org
4 Lake, "Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory," 40.
5 Alastair Finlan, *The Gulf War 1991* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003), 20.
6 Ibid., 81.
7 Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco*: *The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 5.
8 Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 12.
9 Ibid.
10 See John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: The Free Press, 2004), 23–25.
11 James Bamford, *A Pretext for War: 9/11, Iraq, and the Abuse of America's Intelligence Agencies* (London: Doubleday, 2004), 274.
12 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 17.
13 Ibid.
14 John Keegan, *The Iraq War* (London: Hutchinson, 2004), 96.
15 Andrew Cockburn, *Rumsfeld: An American Disaster* (London: Verso, 2007), 103.
16 Ibid.
17 John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (London: Allen Lane, 2007).
18 Cited in Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 404.
19 Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 21.
20 Ibid., 22.
21 Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (London: The Free Press, 2004), 30.
22 Ibid., 80.
23 Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 187.
24 Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006–2008* (London: Pocket Books, 2009), 432.
25 Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 32.
26 H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (London: HarperPerennial, 1998), 62.
27 Ibid., 334.
28 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 449.
29 Kampfner, *Blair's Wars*, 233.
30 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), 24.
31 Ibid., 181.
32 Under Churchill's political leadership, Generals Wavell, Cunningham, Richie, and Auchinleck would lose their commands. See Correlli Barnett, *The Desert Generals* (London: Orion Books, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
33 Colin McInnes, *Spectator–Sport War: The West and Contemporary Conflict* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 120.
34 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 183.
35 Ibid., 186–187.

36 Lewis Page, *Lions, Donkeys and Dinosaurs: Waste and Blundering in the Armed Forces* (London: William Heinemann, 2006), 85–86.
37 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 187 (Explanation added).
38 Ibid., 186.
39 Ibid., 245.
40 Spectator–Sport Warfare is a popular description for the West's recent campaigns. See McInnes, *Spectator–Sport War*.
41 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 26.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 27.
44 Ibid., 28.
45 Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 40.
46 Cockburn, *Rumsfeld: An American Disaster*, 152.
47 Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 427 (Kindle Edition).
48 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 3.
49 Two officials from Douglas Feith's office, Abram Shulsky (who went to graduate school with Wolfowitz) and Bill Bruner (former aide to Newt Gingrich – another radical voice on Iraq), were inserted into the planning cell. See Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 32.
50 Ibid., 45.
51 Ibid., 25.
52 Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 341.
53 Ibid., 339.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 340.
57 Ibid., 339.
58 See Ricks, *Fiasco*, 127.
59 Franks, *American Soldier*, 400.
60 Ibid., 337.
61 Baron Antoine de Jomini used the term "lines of operation." See Jomini, *The Art of War* (London: Greenhill Books, 1996), 100.
62 Franks, *American Soldier*, 339.
63 See Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds and trans., *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 89.
64 Franks, *American Soldier*, 333.
65 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 50.
66 Ibid., 36.
67 Ibid., 37.
68 Ibid., 50.
69 Ibid., 68.
70 Ibid., 72.
71 Michael DeLong, *Inside CentCom: The Unvarnished Truth about the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2004), 86–87.
72 See Ricks, *Fiasco*, 97.
73 Ibid., 96.

74 Ibid., 97.
75 General Sir Mike Jackson, *Soldier* (London: Corgi Books, 2008), 392–393.
76 Alastair Campbell and Richard Stott, eds, *The Blair Years: Extracts from The Alastair Campbell Diaries* (London: Arrow Books, 2008), 612 (Kindle Edition).
77 Ibid.
78 See Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 310.
79 Ibid., 312.
80 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 46.
81 Franks, *American Soldier*, 345.
82 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 75.
83 Ibid., 88.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid., 89–94.
86 Ibid., 94.
87 See Sir Lawrence Freedman, *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Vol II: War and Diplomacy* (London: Routledge, 2005) (Kindle Edition).
88 Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 250.
89 Ibid., 251.
90 Ibid.
91 Cited in Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 416.
92 Cockburn, *Rumsfeld: An American Disaster*, 62.
93 Ibid., 165–166.
94 Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
95 Ibid.
96 Jackson, *Soldier*, 407.
97 Rice, *No Higher Honour* (Kindle Edition).
98 Jackson, *Soldier*, 406.
99 Rice, *No Higher Honour* (Kindle Edition).

CHAPTER SIX

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Shock and awe is a concept that promotes the idea of rapid dominance over an enemy's "system of systems" through use of precision bombing.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) is one of the most unusual and controversial campaigns of the modern era. Ostensibly, it appears to be a remarkable military victory, but a closer analysis of the fighting and the aftermath paint quite a different picture. A small coalition made up primarily of American and British forces in the face of widespread international opposition invaded Iraq. This extraordinarily small force package managed in a matter of weeks to topple the regime of Saddam Hussein. Notwithstanding various claims that OIF represented a new way of warfare or vindicated Rumsfeld's transformation thesis, it was, in reality, a very traditional campaign that reflected archetypal trends in the contemporary American way of waging war. It was heavily fixated at the operational ground level on attacking targets that were key features of the previous Gulf War I model, the Iraqi military forces, and, especially, the Republican Guard. Senior commanders in OIF placed a great emphasis on the joint nature of the campaign, but in theater, the three armed services of the United States reverted to type and largely fought their own individual battles with a heavy reliance on cultural preferences. The overall visions and predictions of US political and key military elites about the type of enemy and how the campaign should be fought proved to be found greatly wanting in the deserts of Iraq. As such, the direction of the operation and eventual success, in the same manner as Operation Enduring Freedom, rested heavily on ad hoc decisions made by senior commanders in the field against an enemy whose incompetence provided them with enormous latitude for error.

The challenges of Iraq

The strategic and operational challenges posed by OIF were immense and manifold. In terms of geography, Iraq is the size of Germany and Austria combined and from Kuwait, the main start line for the invasion forces, to the capital was a distance of several hundred miles. John Keegan eloquently illustrates the geography issue facing the invading forces and argues that "not only is Iraq a difficult country to invade from the south, because of the narrowness of the point of entry, it is also a difficult country to conquer, because of the distance from the point of entry to Baghdad, over 300 miles to the north."[1] Iraq also shared various borders with quite a mélange of neighbors; some of whom would be friendly to US forces, some neutral and others not. These included Kuwait, Saudi Arabia in the southwest, Jordan in the west, Syria in the northwest, Turkey in the north, and Iran in the east. An important issue that appeared to be overlooked by Central Command (CENTCOM) planners and the Office of the Secretary of Defense was that securing these borders would be vital to the security of the post-Saddam environment, but only large amounts of ground forces could achieve this vital state of affairs. With a population of 24 million[2] divided roughly into three ethnic groups, the Shiites who represented the majority in the south, the Sunni, the minority and traditional rulers of Iraq in the west and located in the center, and the Kurds in their own semi-autonomous region in the north, the coalition also faced a very challenging population control dimension. Despite the neoconservative dogma[3] that the invaders would be seen as liberators, the sheer size and mix of the population posed a very serious operational element to be factored into the plan of attack and subsequent occupation of the country. The population or, more importantly, the perception of the people of Iraq to the invasion would ultimately determine the long-term success of the project. In the worst-case scenario, a widespread national uprising would easily overwhelm the small occupation force.

In purely military terms, the Iraqi Army, though much smaller than the one in 1991, was still, on paper, a force in the range of 250,000–300,000[4] that could present significant difficulties if handled well. The vast majority of troops were in the regular army, roughly 17 divisions,[5] but the best formations include the Republican Guard that was 60,000 strong[6] and the Special Republican Guard around three brigades in size as an "inner security force."[7] In terms of equipment, these forces could draw upon around 2,000 tanks (Soviet era T-55s and T-72s), approximately 2,000 armored personnel carriers, 150 self-propelled artillery pieces, and less than 2,000 towed guns.[8] These were the known Iraqi forces. Another element that would prove to be a very challenging opponent was an irregular formation known as Fedayeen, which, armed with assault rifles,

rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and occasionally anti-tank missile, would act as independent/mobile forces to stiffen resistance in towns and villages. These units were made up of Iraqis, but also foreign volunteers who had come to fight the invaders.[9] Alongside of these irregulars would be nationalists of all descriptions who simply objected to outside forces invading their country. Iraq was certainly not short of weapons, and guns were often readily available in many households. Altogether, the opposition posed by the Iraqi forces would be multi-dimensional with the exception of the air and the sea as the Persian Gulf War of 1991 had witnessed much of the destruction of the former with many aircraft fleeing to Iran and the annihilation of the latter service.[10] These were the major forces, but Iraq also possessed some high-technology weapons in the form of surface-to-surface missiles, both ballistic (Scud derivatives) and converted anti-ship cruise missiles,[11] which could be utilized in a land role.

Video teleconferencing (VTC) enables key commanders and political leaders to have real time communication that spans vast geographical distances using satellite networks.

Transformational warfare in the Iraqi landscape?

A source of much debate in the aftermath of the occupation of Iraq was the issue of whether the campaign represented a new kind of war. Certainly, one of the big questions posed by OIF was the extent to which it fitted within, or was determined by, the Rumsfeldian vision of transformation of warfare. Part of the transformation thesis was rooted in the revolution in military affairs that began to manifest itself in the 1990s. According to Colin McInnes, "the impact of information technology promised a Revolution in Military Affairs, in which operations by ground, sea, and air forces against other ground, sea, and air forces would not only be transformed but relegated to supporting roles. The real battle would be for information."[12] Rumsfeld's insistence on a much smaller force package with which to attack Iraq fitted very much into this new way of thinking, that better information technologies enabled a significant shift away from the necessity of mass force on the battlefield. More precise weapons in the form of satellite-guided bombs allowed single aircraft to be as, if not more, effective than squadrons of bombers in the past. In 1991, an individual modern aircraft such as the F-117A Stealth Fighter armed with two laser-guided bombs offered the equivalent force package to 100 World War II planes.[13] The equivalence stemmed not from the amount of firepower because the 100

aircraft offered considerably more disposable weight of bomb tonnage than the single modern plane, but rather in terms of accuracy. The imprecision of aircraft in World War II meant that planners needed 100 sorties to ensure an effective hit on a single target whereas laser-guided bombs ensured a near 100 percent hit rate, if the weapon did not fail. Interestingly, the development of global positioning system (GPS) bombs, using satellite navigation to hit their targets, made precision more widespread among US forces because any aircraft with a little modification could drop such weapons. This was quite unlike laser-guided bombs that needed a special laser designator fitted to the aircraft or illumination of the target from the ground. GPS bombs were also relatively cheap because the technology just comprised of a nose and tail kit that could be fitted to any standard "dumb" or unguided bomb. However, the first generations of GPS bombs were not as accurate as laser-guided bombs which offered pinpoint accuracy whereas the former landed within a few meters, often three to nine meters, of their target.[14] Therefore, the transformation thesis came with a caveat: more precision, but less accuracy with the initial models of GPS weapons. Consequently, the relative imprecision and liberal use of GPS bombs in OIF would come at a significant price with a greater scope for collateral damage, if dropped in built-up or urbanized areas, or with less effect on well-entrenched troops. Stephen Biddle makes this very key counter-point to transformation advocates that all is new on the battlefield and suggests, "many now argue that long-range, precision-guided weapons have revolutionized warfare, demanding radically new doctrines and tactics. Yet sharp lethality growth is nothing new: it gave rise to the modern system in the first place."[15] Biddle's argument rests around the notion that notwithstanding the extraordinary improvements in accuracy, which are part of an existing historical trend in modern warfare, the effectiveness of so-called transformational technologies rests heavily on whether the enemy is militarily incompetent and allows forces to be caught in the open. Against a savvy enemy using cover and concealment, the effectiveness of precision is sharply reduced.

Satellite-guided munitions are bombs guided to their targets using global positioning satellites. They are accurate to a distance of three to nine meters.

The Rumsfeldian/Franks conception of war fitted well with the transformation concept with a small ground component offering in some respects a supporting role to air power by providing target information that would clear the way for these smaller forces to achieve their ultimate objective, the seizure of the capital. In some respects, it mirrored in a very loose fashion Operation Enduring Freedom with the exception that conventional forces would dominate the ground package, though with

considerable Special Operations Forces (SOF) support. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that Donald Rumsfeld or General Franks appreciated the shortcomings inherent in this interpretation of the transformation thesis and, consequently, the smaller force package devoted to OIF contained within it all the limitations of such uninformed approaches. By insisting on a lighter ground force with a heavier reliance on transformational technologies, Rumsfeld and CENTCOM were optimizing their forces around best-case scenarios that the enemy would fight incompetently and offer a target-rich environment by deploying their key assets in the open. If, however, the enemy did something different, then the lighter force package, especially the ground forces, would find themselves in a very difficult fighting situation in which less mass would incur significantly more risk.

US military culture as an offsetting trend

The desire of the US Secretary of Defense to transform the American force package for OIF was offset to a significant extent by US military culture, which was manifested in the types of forces made available and the degree to which they were in sync with the implicit preferences of the three services. For the US Army, not withstanding a greatly reduced mass, the types of forces allocated to the mission fulfilled the vast majority of its preferences, albeit in smaller quantities in certain areas such as tanks and artillery. Under the control of V Corps (US Army), the major fighting arms were the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), elements of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 5th and 10th Special Forces Groups, the Ranger Regiment, and the 173rd Airborne Regiment.[16] The US Navy and US Marines also achieved the bulk of their preferences with the exception of a frontal amphibious assault, and overall seven carrier strike groups were deployed to support operations along with nine expeditionary strike groups and 33 attack submarines and around 600 aircraft.[17] The US Marines deployed the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, a corps-equivalent command centered on the 1st Marine Division.[18] Finally, the US Air Force also managed to fight in a manner that utilized all of its preferences and key assets included B-2, B-1, and B-52 bombers and 293 fighters including the F-117 Stealth Fighter, F-15s, and F-16s along with a variety of supporting aviation, from tankers to transport aircraft and sophisticated unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) such as Global Hawks and Predators.[19] The character of OIF in terms of the forces structures of the major fighting units, certainly from an American perspective, was very conventional. Aside from a reduced size, the key components fitted exactly with a traditional style of warfare and to some extent this testifies to the difficulty of effecting radical change within military culture. Allan English provides a window on the problems involved in trying to alter

military culture and suggests "changing an organization's culture is feasible but difficult, because assumptions, the deepest level of culture, are unconscious, 'nonconfrontable and nondebateable.'"[20] In view of the relatively short tenure of Donald Rumsfeld who only took office at the turn of the twenty-first century and the impossibility of changing ideas and material orientation such as aircraft carriers, tanks, and bombers in a short space of time, it was hardly surprising that apart from tinkering at the edges with the numbers involved, the Defense Secretary could not provoke radical change. To produce a truly transformed military establishment would take decades to achieve, with regard to not only altering force structure but also producing a new generation of officers who embraced it.

The extent to which OIF mirrored the core preferences of the three armed forces was remarkable, but most striking with regard to the employment of the US Marines. The cap placed by Rumsfeld on the US Army and its heavy formations provided the US Marines with a major part (much bigger than Desert Storm) in the overall ground war. However, the US Marines were not really equipped or best suited for taking on heavy armor formations such as the Republican Guard units. The upshot was a remarkable situation in which lightly armed and armored Marine vehicles (AAVs) (designed specifically for rapid seaborne assault onto a beach whereby they would disgorge their light infantry to conduct the attack) ended up driving 300 miles inland to Baghdad. This was a bizarre role for the US Marines and in the face of a more competent enemy would have precipitated a military disaster. It has been more forcefully put by Adrian Lewis who argues, "every Marine killed in an amphibious track vehicle on the march to Baghdad was a victim of interservice rivalry. Employing light, thin-skinned amphibious track vehicles hundreds of miles from the sea was nothing less than stupid."[21] It is not as the US armed forces created such a situation out of desperation because they had several heavy army divisions available such as the 1st Armored Division and the 1st Cavalry Division equipped with better protected tanks and armored personnel carriers in the shape of the Bradley M2 and that could have done the role of the US Marines as well, if not better, and, more importantly, with less risk. However, military culture, combined with Rumsfeld's cap on army numbers, perhaps best explain how this extraordinary situation arose.

The operational concept behind OIF was also very traditional in scope and orientation with just a few exceptions that stemmed from injudicious choices by the senior command in CENTCOM. General Franks in his memoirs recalls how he described the campaign in his first press briefing and that "'this will be a campaign unlike any other in history,' I said, 'a campaign characterized by shock, by surprise, by flexibility, by the employment of precise munitions on a scale never before seen, and by the application of overwhelming force.'"[22] In reality, apart from the amount

of precision munitions, roughly about 70 percent of the total bombs dropped;[23] this description of the campaign is more rhetoric than reality. OIF mirrored previous campaigns in history whereby the objective of seizing a country depended on a headlong rush to the opposing state's capital. Where the campaign differed was in the critical small amount of ground forces used and their composition with a significant amount of the package being made up by light infantry in the form of the US Marines. In addition, CENTCOM planners applied the concept of maneuver not to encircle and destroy the opposing forces and thereby ensure a contiguous safe zone of operations that steadily moved up country toward the capital, but rather to avoid them to quicken the rush on Baghdad. In some respects, using maneuver in this way defeats the object because it leaves substantial parts of enemy formations intact and they remain an existential threat in the field. This approach carried with it huge risks, not least of the dangers that lines of communication (LOC) were unsecured and supporting units following the major combat arms would be very vulnerable to interdiction by bypassed hostile forces. These exceptions were judgment calls rather than being structural products of an innovative operational strategy. The strategy itself, and the degree to which it represented something new, has been widely criticized[24] and some commentators have argued that Franks merely constructed a loose rehash of Desert Storm.[25] Lewis proposes that, "Franks displayed an incredible lack of imagination in developing his operational plan. He didn't lack confidence in his Army, he lacked confidence in his ability to move beyond the limitations of his experience."[26] There was very little that was deliberately planned as innovative in OIF. Some innovations did come about through necessity such as the inability to deploy the 4th Infantry Division on the Northern Front when Turkey refused to allow their territory to be used in early March 2003 and, consequently, a Special Forces surrogate force was employed instead in the Kurdish region. What was surprising about the campaign was the extent to which, apart from that when hostilities opened, it was ground commanders that took major decisions in the light of the inadequacies of the plan that Franks had constructed. In this respect, it mirrored OEF when endogenous pressures and key commanders on the ground created the conditions for success. This suggests that systemic problems within the higher command management at CENTCOM had not been rectified in the light of the glaring failings in Operation Enduring Freedom and also beset the running of the Iraq campaign.

Laser-guided bombs require a laser spot either from the attacking aircraft or from a laser designation unit on the ground to hit their targets with near pinpoint accuracy.

An unusual way to start a war

The unplanned start of OIF was to a large degree indicative of the tremendous amount of adhocracy that dominated US war planning and subsequent operations in the field. This could be described kindly as symptomatic of a flexible military management system that allowed various stakeholders to have an important vote in the direction and course of the campaign. Alternatively, it can be seen as a weak senior management structure that lacked tight centralized control/leadership and was subject to the whims of different elements. The decision to start OIF prematurely as a result of civilian political elite intervention perhaps points to the latter over the former and the unplanned initiation of the campaign with an attempted decapitation strike against Saddam Hussein provides a useful microcosm of the sorts of problems that would beset the campaign at later stages. The information that Saddam was attending a specific meeting at 3.30 a.m. at Dora Farms outside Baghdad on March 19, 2003 came from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). George Tenet, the director of the CIA, recalls briefing the president about the new information "in the private dining room just off of the Oval Office, we rolled out some maps and briefed the president on the intelligence we had. We were honest with him about the limits of our knowledge. We thought the information was pretty good."[27] George Bush recalls in his memoirs, "the safest course was to stick with the plan. But one thought kept recurring: By killing the dictator we might be able to end the war before it began, and spare lives."[28] The Secretary of Defense mentions of the decision that "I felt Saddam had made his choice. He was not going to stand down. Removing him and his sons with an early air strike would eliminate the top of the Iraqi military command structure with a single blow."[29] A different picture is offered by Condoleezza Rice who notes of the meeting, "the President was skeptical, and frankly, so was I – but all of us agreed that it was worth a shot."[30] The speed of decision making between Washington and Tampa meant that when the president finally made up his mind, General Franks was not included according to some sources "in the final deliberations,"[31] though Rice recalls that "the President asked Don to make sure Tommy Franks agreed,"[32] and the order was passed to him via the air war commander, General "Buzz" Moseley.[33] The upshot of this decision was the dispatch of two F-117 Stealth Fighters (call signs Ram 1 and Ram 2) on a very last minute and risky mission because they assumed a bunker complex and needed bombs (in addition to a planned cruise missile strike) to hit the target effectively. The strikes were successfully executed and the planes returned safely. The problem was, however, Saddam was not hit and "after the fall of Baghdad, U.S. forces examined the Dora Farms site. There was no underground bunker and no evidence that Saddam Hussein had been there. Ram 1 and Ram 2 had bombed an empty field."[34] It was not that the pilots had missed their

targets; indeed, they were using satellite-guided weapons with the precise coordinates of the target given to the bombs' guidance system, but there was no target to hit. Two valuable pilots and multi-million-dollar aircraft, along with Tomahawk missiles, were risked and expended for nothing. Had either pilot been shot down and the risk was high in view of the near proximity of dawn because the Stealth Fighter is designed to fly at night and is painted jet black that is very visible in daylight, then Saddam's regime would have been handed a propaganda coup.

The attempted decapitation strike at Dora Farms, which started the war against Iraq, reveals the extent to which even the timing of the main attack against Saddam was taken out of the hands of the most important military leader in CENTCOM who was not included in the initial debate in Washington to attack or not. This was a remarkable state of affairs when the key military decision maker is left out of the final discussions about initiating hostilities. It also sheds a great deal of light on the Bush administration that they did not consider seeking the advice of the most important military commander in the chain of command. Overall, it displayed and illuminated huge flaws, fissures, and cleavages in the US system of making war and particularly with regard to the ease with which political elites could intervene in critical military decisions on the eve of hostilities. It also spoke volumes about the significance, or lack of, coalition partners in top-level decision making. John Kampfner reveals the situation in Britain, America's principal partner in the campaign, that Tony Blair received a telephone call from one of his advisors, David Manning, and "he switched to Sky and watched the sudden American change of tactics materialize on TV, just like everyone else. Condoleezza Rice had phoned Manning and asked him to pass on the news. Blair had been informed, not consulted."[35] Alastair Campbell, a key adviser to Tony Blair, recalls "I was woken at 3am by Godric. Did I know action had begun? Then media calls started. It turned out the US had some late, sudden intelligence re Saddam's whereabouts and took the decision to go straight away."[36] In simple terms, Britain, which had supplied around 40,000 troops[37] for the campaign, the second largest coalition partner, was not privy to arguably the most important decision of the campaign. Taken together, it reveals the extraordinary influence of civilian political elites in critical military decisions that had the scope to seriously disrupt the preparation for the conflict, planned to start just a few hours after the Dora Farms strike. The bigger question raised by the attempted decapitation strike is would it have won the war for the coalition in a single blow or was it case of wishful thinking taking precedence over strategic reality.

Equally important, the Dora Farms incident revealed that the intelligence was very wrong and drew a sharp focus on the performance of the CIA in the campaign. Unlike Afghanistan, the CIA's influence in Iraq was far more limited and relegated to a "supporting" the military effort, rather

than a "supported" role.[38] It was strong in the north of the country in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region and, in February 2002, the agency established the Northern Iraq Liaison Element (NILE)[39] to facilitate the eventual nexus between US forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga irregular fighters, but considerably less so in the more important south and west of Iraq. Some sources have attributed the false information about Dora Farms as coming from Saddam's regime itself. According to Thomas Ricks, "Richard Perle later concluded that the U.S. government had been fooled"[40] into starting the war prematurely. A shortage of good-quality intelligence about Saddam's regime bedeviled US preparations and plans for war against Iraq. For instance, a great deal of effort, time, and excellent-quality Special Forces were set aside for the possibility that Saddam's regime might collapse overnight. As Gordon and Trainor reveal on the eve of the Dora Farms strike that "at Franks's headquarters in Qatar, there was a sense of expectation. McKiernan had made preparations to fly a mobile command post to the Baghdad International airport in C-17 transport planes if the regime collapsed quickly."[41] This plan for a shadowy formation called Task Force 20 to seize the airport had been practiced several times in the United States[42] and perhaps reveals the extent to which US military thinking and the intelligence picture were dreadfully out of sync with the realities on the ground. At no stage, until coalition forces physically reached Baghdad, was the regime in serious jeopardy of collapsing. Mature regimes, especially one as old as Saddam's, unless facing a spontaneous popular revolution, rarely fall so quickly. The intelligence picture for many conventional forces attacking Iraq often proved to be "not reliable"[43] and, consequently, it placed a greater onus on units acquiring their own information or a better gauge of Iraq society from just being located in country. The CIA's performance in the run-up to the Iraq campaign and in various crucial aspects of the military offensive was mixed at best and not a patch on their activities just two years previously in the Afghan theater of operations.

Iraqi "shocks" to the Rumsfeld/Franks' concept of war

It was unsurprising in many respects that the US ground forces were completely stunned when they invaded Iraq by a different type of opposition than had been expected. This was made apparent by a very controversial incident during the campaign when the commander of V Corps, General Scott Wallace, gave a joint interview to the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and stated "'the enemy we're fighting,' Wallace told the reporters, 'is a bit different than the one we war-gamed against, because of these paramilitary forces. We knew they were here, but we did not know

how they would fight.'"[44] The comments appeared to state the obvious and according to some accounts almost cost the general his job because it was perceived by Rumsfeld and his aides "as a vote of no confidence in their strategy."[45] Conventional armed forces are geared ideationally and materially to fight conventional enemies. It is as Norbert Elias argues that there is an intimate "connection between the social structure and the structure of affects."[46] Social structures affect and mold dispositions within fighting institutions, and officers trained and experienced in conventional warfighting for the bulk of their careers are highly unlikely to expect to fight a different kind of war. This was very much the case with the invasion of Iraq. Expectations did not fit with the reality on the ground and this caused a major rethink among field commanders. CENTCOM and the US Army had anticipated that OIF would in essence be focused on fighting the conventional armed forces of the Iraqi state so when the ground forces ran into significant resistance from the Fedayeen, it caused a great deal of consternation and forced a significant change of plans just a week or so into initial operations. Franks admits in his memoirs, "our lack of reliable HUMINT had given us a nasty surprise: We'd had no warning that Saddam had dispatched these paramilitary forces from Baghdad."[47] The combination of irregular fighters, poor intelligence from the CIA, and "the failure of the Shiite factions in southern Iraq to support the American and British invasion"[48] caused very significant operational problems for the US ground forces.

Within a matter of days, the Rumsfeld/Franks' conception of war began to fall apart under the pressure of the fighting that was quite limited in many respects in southern Iraq. The reasons really stem from the flawed ontological assumptions that underpinned the entire project: that the opposition would be light; that the enemy would, as they had in the first Gulf War of 1991, melt away, and that an almost perfect set of circumstances would allow a very light assault force to reach Baghdad very quickly. It did not take into account that the Iraqi forces may have learned from their previous bad experiences of fighting against the United States and had adapted to their enemy. To what extent this was a manifestation of victory syndrome drawn from the stunning success of Operation Enduring Freedom and the residual glow of the remarkable Operation Desert Storm remains open to question. Nevertheless, the plan formulated by political and military elites in Washington and CENTCOM was very much a faith-based strategy, closely aligned with neoconservative dogma and best expressed by one of its key proponents that the invasion of Iraq would be a "cakewalk."[49] Unfortunately, it was wildly off-mark and revealed a very poor grasp of the true nature of warfare that would have been rectified by just a loose grasp of the classical understandings of war and strategy. The situation that faced US forces after March 20 fitted precisely with Clausewitz's notion of friction in war. The great strategist described this

phenomenon in these terms that bear a great deal of relevance for the misconceived Rumsfeld/Franks plan of action that "everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war."[50] The friction that beset US ground forces was in part self-induced, but also created by the negligent underestimation of the enemy and the failure to realize that war is a contest of two sides. The resistance of the Fedayeen caused a double shock in the sense that they were unexpected outside of Baghdad and the sheer ferocity of their attacks, but equally the regular Iraqi forces also displayed levels of military effectiveness that had been completely unanticipated.

The evidence that the Iraqi armed forces had learned from their bad experience in the Gulf War of 1991 was starkly illustrated by the aftermath of the 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment's attempted attack on the Medina Republican Guard Division on the night of March 23, 2003. The Apache attack helicopter was one of the stars of Operation Desert Storm, a Cold War system that promised to blunt massive armored assaults by the forces of the Warsaw Pact using its hellfire missile and 30 mm chain gun. The version deployed in OIF was even better as it was equipped with an improved radar system called "longbow." The significance of the Apache regiment to the overall plan of attack is captured by Gordon and Trainor who note that "the V Corps planned to conduct repeated deep helicopter attacks against the Republican Guard, strikes that Wallace's planners believed would be all-important because the land invasion had not been preceded by a prolonged air campaign."[51] The Apache symbolized in many respects the modern US Army with its emphasis on high technology equipment that could offer enhancements to offensive strategies and rapidly take the fight to the enemy. The Apaches were more than just a helicopter, but the embodiment of a corpus of ideas about warfare that had been steadily developing with the army in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. The attack on the Medina Division proved to be a disaster. Of the 32 Apaches that launched the assault, 31 had sustained serious battle damage with one shot down and captured intact by the Iraqi forces.[52] In the aftermath of the Gulf War of 1991, the Iraqi armed forces had placed considerable time and effort into working out effective counter-Apache tactics. The anti-helicopter system that emerged were comprised of dedicated units and "each team had five vehicles – military as well as civilian trucks – and its weapons included machine guns, ZPU-23–2 cannons, S-60 guns, and SA-7 and SA-14 surface to air missiles."[53] Overall, a powerful mix of capabilities and one that could engage helicopters at low and medium levels with a very good chance of achieving hits on these valuable military assets. Another innovative feature of this improved defensive system was that it was mobile: teams fired at the helicopters and quickly changed positions, but most importantly, the tactics explicitly taught the anti-helicopter teams to "throw up a wall of

fire through which the helicopter would have to fly."[54] It was a simple yet ingenious solution to the Apache problem and the effect was stunning because the Apaches failed to seriously disrupt or damage their intended targets. The impact of the failed strike on the Medina Division was to have long-standing consequences for the US Army's concept of war using the Apache helicopter. According to Thomas Ricks, "early in 2006, the Army quietly disclosed that it had concluded that the Apache was so vulnerable to rifle fire that it would no longer have a major role in attacks deep behind enemy lines."[55] This incident revealed that the Iraqi armed forces had learned a great deal from past experience and had managed in a single night to neutralize one of the most advanced and powerful formations in the entire arsenal of the invading forces.

The pause

The original plan of attack for Iraq finally ground to a halt on March 24 just four days into offensive operations and to a significant degree it represented a crisis point in the strategy and command of OIF. Many have dismissed the "fuss" over the pause as being overblown,[56] but nevertheless, it was a very noteworthy event in the campaign. The insistence on a very light footprint for the invading forces meant that the mad dash for the capital would inevitably have to stop on the basis on logistics, if nothing else. The unexpected resistance put up by irregular forces combined with appalling weather conditions when a massive sandstorm hit the coalition forces for three days from March 24 onwards placed too much pressure on the fragile logistics systems created by the Rumsfeld/Franks' concept of operation. With pressure coming from the enemy on the dangerously vulnerable and thin LOCs that represented the very logistical arteries on which the entire venture is dependent and the impossibility of pushing forward safely through a sandstorm, the drive north was sensibly halted on March 24 by General McKiernan. The crisis of the pause revealed the huge fissures of perceptions and priorities of field commanders and the overall commander of CENTCOM. For McKiernan, it was apparent that the strategy had to change and time factored in to deal with the threat posed by the Fedayeen and irregular forces to supply lines before dealing with the Republican Guard. General Franks, in contrast, was very dismissive of the threat posed by them stating that unlike Somalia in 1993, in which irregulars were effective against the US forces in Humvees or light vehicles, "an open pickup mounting a 12.7 mm machine gun was about as effective as a horse-fly when it attacked an M-1 tank or Bradley."[57] To a significant extent, Franks was looking at the threat posed by the Fedayeen as more of a tactical problem, rather than as a significant operational problem in its own right. The pressure of the vulnerable LOC had already been cruelly

exposed when a unit from the 507th Patriot Maintenance Company on March 23 became lost in Nasiriyah and pinned down by Fedayeen fighters leaving 11 dead, 9 wounded, and 7 captured[58] including Private Jessica Lynch who would become an instant media darling after she was "rescued" by US Special Forces on April 1, 2003.[59] The problems with the LOC/supply were largely a result of his own making, and whether his refusal to consider it a major problem was a consequence of a general failure to openly acknowledge flaws in the original plan remains a moot point.

A significant part of the sharp differences in perspectives revolved around distances from the frontline and situational awareness. Franks was located in Qatar, whereas McKiernan was at Camp Doha in Kuwait. In addition, technology was adding to the distance factor and skewed perspectives. Franks' view of the operation was coming from several apertures. These included Predator drones flying overhead, the tracker systems (a blue tracker showed a computer image of all US forces and red tracker provided an estimation of enemy positions) and also the senior commander seemed to be influenced by media perspectives as well, especially from embedded reporters with particular units. This is revealed in a sharp conversation with McKiernan over a change in strategy during the pause because "Franks was not keen on holding the V Corps back while Buzz Moseley's warplanes decimated the Republican Guard. 'We are parked,' Franks complained. The 3rd Infantry Division, Franks continued, was a 'shit magnet.'"[60] His assessment of the situation was remarkably out of touch with reality and appeared more informed by CNN than by what was actually happening on the ground. CNN had embedded one of their reporters, Walter Rodgers, with the 7th Cavalry (3–7) and his reports were bombastic at best. In addition, the CENTCOM commander's appraisal of the fighting and which units were doing well appeared to draw more upon which unit was spearheading the advance, rather than acknowledging the wider/more holistic situation that his position as overall commander should have afforded him. It displayed a remarkable disconnection with his fighting command and begs the question of whether all the technological aids in communications such as video conferencing facilities and live feeds from Predator drones, for example, rather than bringing the senior commander closer to the battle, actually worked the other way. Did the spectator–sport view of the war insulate and cause a command bubble effect instead of allowing the commander to get a real sense of perspective? These technologies provide ground commanders with more of an airman's view of war: insulated, detached, and from a lofty height whereas Franks could always have exercised the commander's right to go into the field, but apart from visiting Camp Doha, this was not a usual occurrence. Regardless of the environmental circumstances, what Franks did not appear to appreciate was that the invasion forces in the light of the unexpected resistance were short on combat power in theater. McKiernan

adjusted his forces as best as he could, using, for instance, the brigade from the 82nd Airborne Brigade that was orientated for the assault on Baghdad airport to tackle the Fedayeen around Samawah to free units for the attack on the capital,[61] but he needed more divisions.

In the light of this pressing need, the decision to keep the 4th Infantry Division on board ships floating in the Mediterranean Sea as a feint, notwithstanding Turkey's veto of a northern front through its territory in early March, remains deeply puzzling. Even on 25th March, Franks admits that he still wanted to keep them in place, essentially nine days away from Kuwait, because the "deception is holding."[62] This decision was completely at odds with what his forces in Iraq needed and also what General McKiernan wanted. As some commentators have noted, "the debate over the 4th ID was another example of the differences between Franks and his subordinates about the nature of the enemy and what it would take to defeat him."[63] It was McKiernan's intervention in this period that set the conditions for the successful assault on Baghdad with the adoption of a "parallel" approach in which air power and army aviation would continue to attack the Republican Guard while the problems posed by the Fedayeen were dealt with simultaneously.[64] Franks located in his headquarters in Qatar and Rumsfeld in Washington were forced to accept this state of affairs because there was very little that they could do about it in view that weather conditions had stalled the assault, but not the fighting. A crisis offers opportunities as well as anxious moments and for military culture it sharply exposes the deep underlying preferences of the service engaged in the fighting. McKiernan, in the same manner as generations of American army officers, saw firepower/combat power as the solution to the problem. This was an age-old fallback and cultural preference that can be traced back to World War II. The shortage of manpower placed an even greater emphasis on the need for more combat power to deal with the operational problems caused by inadequate planning for the mission. The pause and the shift in strategy was another example of how the top management of the US armed forces under the Rumsfeld/Franks axis was simply not working or capable of conducting effective operations under the stress of war. Endogenous agents within the US armed forces critically intervened to make the strategy work when the old plan had simply failed because it was deeply flawed in conception, out of touch not only with the combat reality on the ground, but simply with strategic and operational commonsense.

Air operations

To a very great degree, the Rumsfeldian vision of war pivoted firmly around the application of the new generation of air power that was more precise than ever before. This concept drew heavily on an increasingly popular

idea within air power theory that has been pithily summed up as "shock and awe." According to Gordon and Trainor during the planning process for OIF, Rumsfeld suggested to Franks that he should "review *Shock and Awe*, a study co-authored by Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade, the latter a defense intellectual and former Pentagon official. The tome argued that salvos of precision weapons could be used to paralyze the enemy's command and control and thus achieve 'rapid dominance.'"[65] The idea of "shock and awe" was based around the idea of rapid dominance "to destroy or so confound the will to resist that an adversary will have no alternative except to accept our strategic aims and military objectives."[66] This vision of air warfare was nothing new and can be process-traced back to the strategic bombing campaigns in World War II, which explicitly targeted the morale of the people. After killing hundreds of thousands of civilians in the course of the war with little effect on the Nazi or Japanese regimes, the idea was widely discredited. Shock and awe, a more refined version of morale bombing by other means, merely added a new twist on this false premise by trying to target the will of the state, rather than the people. In the final analysis, it was a rehash of the air power myth that emerged with the writings of Guilio Douhet in the 1920s that air power alone could win wars without the need for ground and sea forces, but history had always proved it wrong. The application of "shock and awe" in OIF was executed on the night of March 21, 2003, yet while making good television, it was not all it seemed at the time. The plan of attack called for "three near simultaneous waves of strikes"[67] comprised of Tomahawk strikes initially over 300 in total[68] which would consume a great deal of anti-aircraft fire before being followed by nine F-117 Stealth Fighters and then B-2 strikes.[69] Unfortunately, due to tanker problems, only three F-117s would take part in the attack, but Iraqi anti-aircraft fire was still intense as they carried out their attacks.[70] The problem of the planners of "shock and awe" was that its effect was less than anticipated and the Iraqi regime did not crumble.[71] This was entirely consistent with previous wars in history in which air power did not deliver what it promised. Equally, the Iraqi regime had acquired an intimate experience of US air power and so all these facilities had sensibly been evacuated once the war had started a few days earlier. What was all the more remarkable about the lack of effectiveness of the strategic air campaign was that it started not in March 2003, but in fact a year earlier. It had been covertly conducted under the cover of policing the UN authorized no-fly zones since July 2002 under a plan called Southern Focus in which US aircraft dropped 606 bombs on 391 targets.[72] Such activities were, however, completely contrary to international law. Strategic air power in OIF was found, yet again, wanting and did not produce the spectacular results that its proponents had expected.

In contrast, the application of air power in support of the coalition ground forces or tactical air power was, however, very effective and

played a crucial role in defeating the Republican Guard. The 3rd Infantry Division was supported by the 4th Air Support Operations Group (ASOG) and the US Marines had their own supporting aviation, as was their long-standing tradition to fight all arms wherever possible. Lewis suggests "the conventional war was considered a major success for 'jointness' between the Army and the Air Force because of the 'unprecedented degree of air-ground coordination.' In the V Corps area of operation the 4th ASOG conducted 886 battlefield-shaping missions and 606 close air support missions."[73] The effectiveness of air power when combined with ground forces concerning specific targets reinforced the lesson of OEF that when working in close association with soldiers on the ground, air power was transformed from a relatively blunt instrument into a highly effective and accurate tool of force. Again, this supported trends evident in World War II: air forces were most effective when they were closely coordinated with ground forces and the German Luftwaffe was a particularly good example of an outstanding ground-support air force. The transforming point of the campaign, however, was during the massive sandstorm that halted the coalition ground forces and General McKiernan's pressure to refocus air force efforts toward targeting the Republican Guard. This exploited the technological advantages bestowed by satellite-guided munitions, which could not be replicated by any other technology. It meant that the Republican Guard could be targeted through the sandstorm using these precision-guided munitions using coordinates provided by space-based assets such as satellites. These technologies provided not only secure communications, bandwidth, and the means to control unmanned aircraft over the theater but also the ability to target key Iraqi assets. It was "imaging radar satellites" that "detected and pinpointed the movement of the Republican Guard forces so they could be destroyed by airpower."[74] According to some Iraqi sources, the targeting of the Republican Guard from the air during the sandstorm effectively broke the Iraqi will to fight.[75]

British operations from Umm Qasr to Basra City

At first glance, the British contribution to OIF or what the British called Operation Telic seems to be a minor sideshow of the war, as they were eventually, after the Turkey option was cancelled, given responsibility for dealing with Iraq's second largest city, Basra in the far southeast of the country. In reality, the British contribution was far more important to the American effort than is usually taken for granted. As one senior participant in the campaign noted that with the failure to gain access to the Turkish front and the decision to keep the 4th Infantry Division, arguably the most

powerful US division, at sea, out of the action in the Mediterranean meant that the "UK contribution was critical."[76] By the start of the campaign, the British component made up "30%" of the overall "tank capability" of the coalition forces.[77] Senior British officers were also very much embedded within the US command system that helped enormously ensuring that they were close in sync with the overall operational picture. The United Kingdom's Maritime Component Commander, Rear Admiral David Snelson, directed operations from ashore in Bahrain, the Middle East Headquarters of the US Navy with his CENTCOM counterpart.[78] British forces were very much a junior partner in the coalition due to the massive material disparities in the size of the contributing forces, but by placing senior officers in these strategic locations, it ensured that the British had a voice or an ear where the decisions would be ultimately made by General Franks. British military elites like their American counterparts endured significant political elite interference in their military preparations that would have significant operational consequences. The sheer sensitivity of the issue to the British public resulted in British political elites led by Tony Blair leaving vital decisions about the critical military logistics to the very last moment possible. The absence of a formal war cabinet before the hostilities, again due to the sensitivity of the issue with a number of ministers being opposed to the proposed invasion, also curtailed vital discussions about war planning and the aftermath. In a material sense, there were shortages of essential pieces of military equipment and notably enough desert uniforms.[79] A great deal of equipment was procured at the very last minute under urgent operational requests, which speaks volumes about the planning process. According to one source, an order for "37,000 sets of body armour, requested by the MOD on 13 September 2002 but only ordered in November after the passage of a UN resolution [. . .] The delay was to have fatal results during the invasion."[80] In addition, the campaign started very badly for the British forces when eight Royal Marines were killed in a helicopter accident flying forward in a US Marine helicopter right in the early phase of the operation.[81]

The major problem for political elites in Britain was that the vast majority of people in the country did not want to go to war with Iraq. This was, and remains, a decision pushed by Tony Blair and his inner circle of advisors and sanctioned by Parliament literally on the eve of battle. For the armed forces, this was a difficult state of affairs with the public against the war and international legal opinion sharply against it, yet the British political elites ordered them to conduct operations. The delays in political decision making inevitably impacted on the integration of the different air, land, and sea components within the US command structures as well because a late start to establishing these critical interfaces did not facilitate smooth and unrushed operational planning. The British mission was multi-dimensional in scope, to work closely with the US Marines and

take control of the Rumaylah Oilfields[82] to allow the US Marines to push northwards by protecting the US flanks. New information revealed by the ongoing Iraq Inquiry in the United Kingdom suggests that during the US "pause" at al Najaf, General McKiernan was under "intense pressure" (the source is not specified) and in this context the US commander "asked" the British Land Forces Commander, General Robin Brims, to "take Basra to demonstrate success."[83] This is an extraordinary piece of evidence and key parts of it with what can only be speculated as very interesting elements have been redacted, but it indicates the effect of pressures (internal and external) in influencing the direction of military actions by senior coalition partners. On the naval side of operations, the port of Umm Qasr, Iraq's only major port, was "a specified task"[84] for British maritime forces to ensure humanitarian aid and other supplies flowed through southern Iraq. In view that the approaches to the port were likely to be mined, the British naval contribution was fortunate to possess more advanced mine clearance capabilities and expertise than US coalition partners. As such, it placed an emphasis on their role in this part of the campaign. The deployment of Royal Marines on the Al Faw peninsular stemmed initially from the requirement to enable "the Mine Counter-Measure Vessels" to "operate safely"[85] as they cleared a path through to Umm Qasr and this developed over time to encompass a "brigade-size operation" to secure the "oil infrastructure" in the region.[86] The British maritime component eventually operated two major helicopter platforms, HMS *Ark Royal* and HMS *Ocean*, to support operations ashore with both transport helicopters and airborne early warning (AEW) Sea King Mark VII. The absence of dedicated landing platform dock (LPD) ships meant that the Royal Marines under the command of Brigadier Jim Dutton got their equipment ashore partly from the sea and over land via Kuwait; however, the Royal Marines enjoyed the benefits of British naval gunfire support (NGS).

The planning behind the British operations in OIF was necessarily rushed because there was great uncertainty, even just a few months before the start of the campaign as to where the British forces would be located. When the bulk of the British forces set sail in mid-January, British military elites did not know where they would be going north to Turkey or south to Kuwait. Even when British force commanders knew where they were going, there was a degree of uncertainty as to what mission they would undertake. According to Brigadier Graham Binns, Commanding Officer of 7th Armored Brigade, the famous Desert Rats, of the early planning stage for southern Iraq:

> we were given a task to conduct a relief-in-place in southern Iraq and the task of protecting the right flank of the US Marines in order to enable them to move towards Baghdad. So the tactical tasks that we were given were all related to enabling the US Marines to move across the Euphrates

> towards Baghdad. They were not particularly focused on the holding of ground or the entry into urban areas. In fact the only urban area we needed to take was Umm Qasr, to secure the port. We did not, at an early stage, anticipate moving into Basra. Our task was to confront the Iraqi Army coming out of Basra, which was threatening to interfere with the US Marines.[87]

The British approach to operations in and around Basra under the command of Major General Robin Brims was markedly different to the US approach and this caused a degree of friction with General Franks. The model for the British approach was Al Zubayr, a town with 100,000 inhabitants,[88] and consisted of a policy to "stand-off" and "establish a series of checkpoints"[89] so that people could continue their daily lives as normal, but hostile forces would be engaged and an intelligence picture built up. The concept ensured that the British forces did not have to destroy large parts of the town, but they could "separate the regime from normal life."[90] The success of this concept of operations was subsequently applied to Basra after General McKiernan had asked them to take it. It was a "softly softly" approach akin to the Al Zubayr mission, but inevitably the slow manner of operations would draw fire from CENTCOM commanders seeking quick results. Gordon and Trainor reveal the tensions between the separate commands because to McKiernan British forces "had already accomplished their main strategic purpose by fixing the Iraqi forces in Basra and in eastern Iraq. On Franks's computer screen in Qatar, the red icons looked like menacing formations but McKiernan saw them as hollow symbols of divisions that had little will to fight."[91] For the UK armed forces, they were culturally disposed not to create mass amounts of collateral damage, but also mindful of the huge public opposition to the campaign that would not have tolerated a bloodbath in Basra. The turning point of the operation to seize the city occurred with a precision strike on the Baath Party headquarters that was rumored to, but did not, kill the key party official in the city on 6th April persuaded British commanders to send in stronger probes and meeting little resistance, 7th Armored Brigade was sent into the city with 3 Commando Brigade to the south of the city and 16th Air Assault Brigade sent to secure the northern town of Diya.[92] The city of 1.3 million people[93] fell under British control shortly after these operations were initiated for the loss of just three soldiers.[94] The British component of OIF played a very significant part in the overall campaign, not only in facilitating it but also in securing Iraq's second largest city for a minimum of casualties on all sides.

In sum, OIF was a very fortunate campaign in view of the ideational and material inadequacies of the original plan and the force package designed to initiate regime change in Iraq. The Iraqi forces did not fight in the same way that CENTCOM has imagined and the various "surprises" caused

considerable challenges to operational commanders in the field. Much of the faith-based approach to strategy by senior commanders in Qatar and political leaders in Washington was cruelly exposed by the relatively light opposition in Iraq and operational commanders had to adapt to the unplanned situations that faced them, often without recourse to senior commanders in CENTCOM who appeared quite out of touch with the reality on the ground. The employment of air power in the strategic role also suffered from various failings in terms of the underpinning ideas and the implementation of the strikes. "Shock and awe" while good television at the time, akin to a giant firework display in Baghdad, did not live up to its anticipated effects. In reality, it masked fundamental conceptual flaws about the application of air power, even for armed forces with the possession of the most accurate weapons in human history. The "pause" in the ground campaign reflected more than just a necessary logistical re-supply juncture: it was also a critical period of time to readjust to the actual operational realities on the ground, rather than that war-gamed before hostilities, and also the dreadful environmental conditions that could not have been predicted. Enhanced communications technologies such as videoconferencing and the blue force tracker system did not dispel the fog of war for senior commanders and at times appeared to add another layer of cloud over the actual battlefield. Interestingly, American and British forces fought very different campaigns in Iraq that reflected their military cultures and the contribution of the junior partner, while often overlooked, was actually of vital importance. British forces tackled a multi-dimensional operation in southern Iraq that ranged from traditional land operations through to the most complex amphibious operations. Finally, the incompetence of the enemy gave American and British forces extraordinary levels of latitude on the battlefield that provided them with enough space and time to overcome the flaws in the original plan of attack.

Questions

1. What military problems did the US forces encounter in their drive to Baghdad?
2. What role did Special Operations Forces play in Operation Iraqi Freedom?
3. What contributions did British forces make to the campaign?
4. Assess the significance of the so-called pause in the assault on Baghdad.
5. Assess the effectiveness of the Iraqi forces in opposition to the coalition invasion.

Notes

1 John Keegan, *The Iraq War* (London: Hutchinson, 2004), 140.
2 Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 4.
3 Richard Perle predicted the Americans would be greeted "as liberators." See ibid., 169.
4 Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 420.
5 Keegan, *The Iraq War*, 128.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 129.
9 See ibid., 129–130.
10 Alastair Finlan, *The Gulf War 1991* (Oxford: Osprey, 2003), 46.
11 See Dennis M. Gormley, "Missile Defence Myopia: Lessons from the Iraq War." *Survival,* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2003–2004): 66.
12 Colin McInnes, *Spectator–Sport War: The West and Contemporary Conflict* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 115.
13 Finlan, *The Gulf War 1991*, 30.
14 David Jordan, "Air and Space Warfare" in *Understanding Modern Warfare*, eds David Jordan, James D. Kiras, David J. Lonsdale, Ian Speller, Christopher Tuck, and C. Dale Walton (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 216.
15 Stephen Biddle, *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 53.
16 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 421.
17 Ibid., 421–422.
18 Ibid., 421.
19 Ibid.
20 Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 23.
21 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 429.
22 General Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 484.
23 See Alastair Finlan, "Trapped in the Dead Ground: US Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Iraq." *Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies,* 16, no. 1 (2005): 7.
24 See Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 115–116.
25 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 417.
26 Ibid.
27 George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA* (London: HarperPress, 2007), 393.
28 George Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Virgin Books, 2010), 254 (Kindle Edition).
29 Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 460 (Kindle Edition).

30 Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
31 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 171.
32 Rice, *No Higher Honor* (Kindle Edition).
33 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 171.
34 Ibid., 177.
35 John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: The Free Press, 2004), 310–311.
36 Alastair Campbell and Richard Stott, eds, *The Blair Years: Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries* (London: Arrow Books, 2008), 683 (Kindle Edition).
37 Jack Fairweather, *A War of Choice: The British in Iraq 2003–9* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
38 This is a point emphasized by George Tenet. See Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, 385.
39 Ibid., 386.
40 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 117.
41 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 171–172.
42 Ibid., 328.
43 Ibid., 177.
44 Ibid., 311.
45 Ibid., 312.
46 Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 169.
47 Franks, *American Soldier*, 486.
48 Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 255.
49 This was famously expressed by a former Rumsfeld assistant and ardent neoconservative, Kenneth Adelman – see Ricks, *Fiasco*, 36.
50 Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds, *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 119.
51 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 261.
52 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 119.
53 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 270.
54 Ibid.
55 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 119.
56 This view was also shared by General Mike Jackson – see General Sir Mike Jackson, *Soldier* (London: Corgi Books, 2008), 412.
57 Franks, *American Soldier*, 487.
58 Charles H. Briscoe, Kenneth Finlayson, Robert W. Jones Jr, Cherilyn A. Walley, A. Dwayne Aaron, Michael R. Mullins, and James A. Schroder, eds, *All Roads Lead to Baghdad: Army Special Operations Forces in Iraq* (Fort Bragg: USASOC History Office, 2006), 314.
59 Ibid., 317.
60 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 307.
61 Ibid., 305.
62 Franks, *American Soldier*, 500.
63 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 307.
64 Ibid., 305.

65 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 35–36.
66 Ullman and Wade cited in Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 414.
67 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 211.
68 Franks, *American Soldier*, 481.
69 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 211.
70 Ibid.
71 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 423.
72 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 69.
73 Lewis, *The American Culture of War*, 423.
74 Ibid., 422.
75 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 125.
76 Witness statement to the Iraq Inquiry by Admiral Lord Boyce (former Chief of the Defence Staff), January 27, 2011.
77 Ibid.
78 Witness statement by Rear Admiral David Snelson (former Commander of British Naval Forces, Operation Iraqi Freedom) to the Defence Select Committee, December 3, 2003. See HC 57-III (Session 2003–2004).
79 See Sean Rayment, "Army Admits Units Were Starved of Kit during the Iraq War." *The Telegraph*, July 6, 2003.
80 Fairweather, *A War of Choice: The British in Iraq 2003–9* (Kindle Edition).
81 Alastair Campbell and Richard Stott, eds, *The Blair Years*, 683 (Kindle Edition).
82 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 454.
83 Witness Statement by Major General Albert Whitley (former Senior British Land Advisor to the Commander of Coalition Forces Land Component Command in Operation Iraqi Freedom), January 27, 2011.
84 Rear Admiral David Snelson, statement.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Graham Binns cited in Paul Moorcroft, Gwyn Winfield, and John Chisholm, eds, *Axis of Evil: The War on Terror* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2005), 72–73.
88 Ibid., 73.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid., 74.
91 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 454 (Explanation added).
92 Ibid., 456.
93 Moorcroft, Winfield, and Chisholm, *Axis of Evil*, 75.
94 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 456.

CHAPTER SEVEN

US/UK strategy in Iraq: The first five years (2003–2008)

An insurgency is an internally driven armed struggle for political domination of a country often involving guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and multiple actors.

The relative ease by which the United States and its coalition partners overcame the official resistance of Iraq's state mechanisms designed to protect it from external threats was hardly surprising. A long decade of debt, decay, and international sanctions had left the Iraqi armed forces barely capable of suppressing internal revolts, let alone the most advanced fighting forces in the world with twenty-first century firepower. The Iraq War was, with a few exceptions and surprises, a heavily one-sided contest in which the outcome was inevitable and starkly apparent to all sides involved in the fighting. The rapid collapse of Saddam's regime in April 2003 as US tanks, soldiers, and marines roamed with virtual impunity around the environs of Baghdad brought into sharp focus the shortcomings of Operation Iraqi Freedom with regard to planning for the day after conquest. Post-Saddam Iraq under the hand of US occupation was characterized by extraordinary levels of social anarchy, looting, and general lawlessness that would engulf most of the country. Ethnic tensions were allowed to spill over into outright warfare, particularly between the Sunni and Shia Communities across the country, but particularly in the capital Baghdad. The failure to plan adequately for Phase IV or the reconstruction and stability effort resulted in an ad hoc and disastrous approach to this vital part of the expedition. A series of self-defeating measures initiated through the mechanism of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) fuelled an increasingly vicious insurgency that consumed significant parts of Iraq. Within the space of just

a few years, the US and UK military effort was on the verge of collapse and neither political elites in Washington or London possessed a solution. In the United States, however, unlike Britain, elements within and outside of the military establishment coalesced together to present a temporary fix to a situation spiraling out of control and this initiative known as the "surge" stabilized Iraq for a limited period of time. All of the problems involved in the occupation of Iraq can be attributed to the absence of a coherent grand strategy during and after Operation Iraqi Freedom. It enabled a vacuum to emerge in the social and political landscape in the immediate aftermath of the conquest of Iraq that effectively derailed the entire project.

The final assault on Baghdad

It is perhaps symptomatic of the wider campaign against Iraq that the attack on Baghdad evolved into an impromptu assault that deviated considerably from the original intent. This is perhaps indicative of the limits of cooperation between senior commanders on the ground and also the cleavages in the concept of joint operations between the US Army and the US Marines. Nevertheless, there was great danger in attacking a city the size of Baghdad with almost 6 million residents and history had demonstrated on numerous occasions that large urban areas were often the graveyard of even the most powerful military formations such as the famous German 6th Army at Stalingrad in World War II. In more recent times, the US Army had struggled a great deal to conduct operations in the vast Somali capital of Mogadishu in 1993 when elite US Army units found themselves almost overwhelmed by an angry mob of citizens, clans, and militias. Gordon and Trainor suggest, "a variety of plans had been considered to divide the battle space. [. . .] The Army and Marines would set up five bases on the outskirts of the capital, all under Wallace's command. It was all part of Wallace's plan to establish cordons around Baghdad and run raids in and out of the city."[1] The American plan to create a cordon around the city and conduct periodic raids into it had merits: by avoiding getting bogged down in the city, it reduced the scope for US casualties and offered a patient means of establishing control, but it was also a slow method of winning the capital. It gave the Iraqi command and control system and top leadership a breathing space to reorganize themselves in the light of the breathtaking speed of the US forces as they closed in on the capital. To the key operational commanders, "it made no sense" and would give "the initiative to the Iraqis."[2] Consequently, "the orders of the senior Army commander were for the most part ignored"[3] and the 3rd Infantry Division and Marines pushed into the city and found little resistance. By April 9, the US Marines famously tore down Saddam's statue in the heart of the city and placed an American flag, albeit briefly, on the dictator's face.

The significance of the assault on Baghdad was the speed with which it was taken and the relatively benign environment that faced the US forces with the exception of their initial armored raids or "Thunder Runs" into the city. Some have described it as "the accidental victory,"[4] but it accented the need for US forces to rapidly transition to Phase IV operations; however, it took the senior US military leadership and political elites' critical time to recognize the pressing urgency to take complete control over their newly occupied territory.

The absence of a grand strategy

Throughout the history of recorded warfare between people, a military assault on a large scale against a tribe, people, or nation has always been a risky venture. In the modern age with the dominance of nation-states, the power of their inherent organizational capabilities, and the lethality of contemporary weapons, from assault rifles and high explosives to precision-guided munitions, regime change strategies in the antiseptic parlance of current diplomacy represent an even greater challenge. The multiplicity of variables involved in attacking a nation-state of significant size are manifold. The collision of people such as soldiers and civilians, technologies, and firepower within a disrupted social environment creates a chaotic situation in which chance, risk, and mortality combine in accelerated form with precarious outcomes for attacker and defenders. The challenge for an attacking party is to try and impose order in the social chaos through military means and achieve their stated objectives. At the heart of this depiction of war resides the issue of the relationship between politics, combat, and strategy. The social chaos in the aftermath of the removal of Saddam's regime highlights one of the most extraordinary criticisms of Operation Iraqi Freedom: there was no coherent grand strategy underpinning the planning and operations. Anthony Cordesman, one of the earliest and most prescient critics of the campaign with a deep knowledge of Iraq, argues, "US officials relied on ideology instead of planning for effective nation building, internal security, and the risk of asymmetric warfare. They failed to either make realistic assessments of the country's divisions and problems or properly prepare for the fall of the regime."[5] One of the more remarkable facets of this criticism was the revelation that these mistakes were not made out of ignorance or due to a shortage of information from leading experts as to the likely consequences of regime change in Iraq. In fact, as Cordesman states, "clear and repeated warnings" were made by specialists in the field of diplomacy, intelligence, and academia.[6] More trenchant criticism has been made by a key advisor in the latter phases of US military operations in Iraq, the Australian counter-insurgency (COIN) guru, David Kilcullen. His influential book, *The Accidental Guerrilla*,

puts the case strongly that "the war, in grand-strategic terms, was a deeply misguided and counterproductive undertaking, an extremely severe strategic error, and a model of exactly how *not* to do business."[7] Whereas Cordesman highlights the failure to listen to advice about the perils of the Iraq adventure, Kilcullen makes the point that the strategic foundations at the very ideational level of the decision to topple Saddam's regime were fundamentally wrong.

The process of producing coherent strategic thinking in US government in relation to translating large-scale military action into political effect in a foreign country located in a culturally distinct region many thousands of miles away from the North American continent collapsed completely in the preparations for the invasion of Iraq. This failing cannot be ascribed in crude terms to structural deficiencies or the hardware in the political and military establishments because all the key mechanisms for generating a joined-up grand strategy were present. There was a clear hierarchy of command, from president to military commander, and powerful agencies of state existed with special responsibility for foreign affairs, intelligence, and military expertise. The problem, however, was human agency or, in other words, the software failed. Put simply, the interactions between political and military decision makers combined with social practices created an environment that was conducive to grand strategic failure in Iraq. Steven Metz provides an interesting nonmaterial explanation of a long-standing trend in US strategy formulation and stresses that "America's conflict with Iraq has also demonstrated one of the enduring problems in American strategy: the difficulty the United States has in developing sound assumptions when the opponent operates within a different psychological and cultural framework."[8] The value of Metz's analysis does help to highlight the psychological dimension of US decision making and also perhaps the starkest shortcoming of the original decision to initiate regime change in Iraq: its demonstrable lack of cultural awareness of Iraqi society and how ordinary citizens would react in both the short and long term to a military invasion/occupation by foreign forces.

Iraq was, and remains, an important part of the Arab world, a region of around 300 million people, that comprised the overwhelming majority of people in the Middle East. In contrast, key decision makers in Rumsfeld's collective of like-minded colleagues were heavily swayed by neoconservative dogma as well as an Israeli perspective on the Middle East, which was, in view of the small size of the population in that country around the 6.7 million, a skewed minority viewpoint, not shared by the vast majority of the people in the region.[9] The notion that Iraqis would passively accept the occupation of their country by an American-led coalition was quite frankly delusional, but understandable given US ethnocentric perspectives among political elites emphasized by Metz that flew in the face of the history of the region, especially the country itself. Arabia had suffered over hundreds of

years waves of occupation from the Ottomans to the marauding European colonial powers from the late nineteenth century onwards, and resistance to occupation had always been a common feature in these countries. From Morocco in the West to Iran in the East, foreign-sponsored regimes had been steadily overthrown through revolutions and bitter insurgency campaigns throughout the twentieth century. Adding to the sense of immediate history, the last great occupation of Arab lands in Palestine by Zionist Jews and the daily brutal consequences for the indigenous population and the misery of millions of displaced refugees in neighboring countries caused by the US-supported Israeli regime remained a running sore in Arabian politics. For area experts and diplomats in the State Department, this history and the consequences of toppling Saddam's regime were well known and a study called the "Future of Iraq" had been commissioned well over a year before the invasion in 2003.[10] The problem was, however, that responsibility for Iraq was given entirely to the Department of Defense. As Charles Tripp explains "given the power and influence of the Pentagon in the wake of the September attacks, the security fears they had provoked and the success of the war in Afghanistan, it was the Defense Department, headed by Donald Rumsfeld, that prevailed – with fateful results for the shaping of Iraq's history."[11] On the surface, allocating the responsibility of Iraq to the Department of Defense appeared logical. It made sense that the agency that would ultimately tear down Saddam's regime should provide the means of stabilizing the country. In addition, its large number of forces, from soldiers to engineers and attached aviation assets, especially helicopters, potentially offered a highly capable mechanism through which to restore essential services to the Iraqi people that may have been interrupted by the war. The utility of these inherent capabilities, however, rested heavily on the willingness of political and military elites to use them.

US political elites within the Department of Defense had not only a specific agenda concerning the war against Iraq but also a fixed idea about its future and much of that conception rested heavily on mistaken, if not naïve, assumptions about the role of the US military in the months following the fall of Saddam. Assumptions play a very important element of any form of planning process and hold an elevated/pivotal position in the formulation of strategy. The types of assumptions can vary considerably in terms of veracity and accuracy, from premises based on the extent of available information to concepts drawn from more shaky foundations such as beliefs, "gut feelings," or a dogmatic application of long-standing ideology concerning a particular issue. As Steven Metz suggests, "assumptions allow strategy to take place when vital information is missing or unknowable. They can deal with the future; with the intentions of an opponent, partner, or unaffiliated actor; or with facts that cannot be discerned."[12] The assumptions among US political elites about the future of Iraq rested on several key premises. First, that there would be no need

for an extended process of nation building because Iraq would function as normal the day after Saddam left office with all the key institutions and essential services running well and maintaining social order. According to one participant in the reconstruction effort, "it was assumed that the dramatic ouster of Saddam would create a '*Wizard of Oz* moment' in Iraq, recalled Carl Strock, the two-star general from the Army Corps of Engineers and a Garner deputy. After the wicked dictator was deposed, throngs of cheering Iraqis would hail their liberators and go back to work."[13] This disturbingly uninformed notion flew in the face of recent history and US experiences in operations such as the Balkans, Somalia, and Haiti, but none of the key architects of the Iraq War had participated in these operations. They simply did not have the appropriate experience of engaging in long-term, often seemingly intractable, reconstruction of lands devastated by warfare, ethnic in-fighting and disrupted civil society. It also fitted tightly with, if not deliberately mirrored, the dogma and assumptions of the idiosyncratic Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, who had no interest in nation building. The problem, however, was that these assumptions neglected a series of glaring and obvious foundational issues that threatened the short- and long-term stability of the entire operation: the parlous state of Iraq in terms of its infrastructure. It had suffered over a decade of neglect, the negative effects of UN sanctions, the inevitable damage, deliberate or unintended, from Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the immense poverty of the vast majority of ordinary Iraqi citizens. It was not that information about the true state of Iraq was unavailable, but rather the Secretary of Defense and his coterie did not want to hear alternative and informed opinions from acknowledged specialists in this area. This very unusual atmosphere of elite decision making fits well with Irving Janis' conception of groupthink that "groups, like individuals have shortcomings. Groups can bring out the worst as well as the best in man. Nietzsche went so far as to say that madness is the exception in individuals but the rule in groups."[14] The combination of groupthink within the civilian leadership of the Pentagon combined with their fixed and specific neoconservative view of the external world provoked some remarkable examples of exclusionary practices that severely hindered the formulation of a coherent plan of action with regard to military action against Iraq. For example, when the State Department offered their experts to assist the Defense Department, in particular Tom Warrick and Meghan O'Sullivan, their services, initially gratefully accepted by the provisional head of the US efforts concerning post-war Iraq, General Jay Garner, were vetoed by Rumsfeld acting allegedly on orders from Vice President Dick Cheney.[15] Bureaucratic in-fighting between the Defense Department and the State Department due to personality clashes between principal Head of Departments effectively insured that the political elites in the former agency were insulated from dissenting voices that did not

agree with their ideologically driven vision of Iraq's future concerning the day after Saddam was ousted from office. In this respect, the process and practices of balanced policy formulation had fundamentally broken down among civilian political elites that laid the groundwork for a potential disastrous military intervention.

Critically placed US military elites, who were in a position to influence events on the ground in Iraq, especially the top leadership of Central Command (CENTCOM), wholeheartedly embraced the Rumsfeldian concept of post-war operations in Iraq. Key military officers, notwithstanding the well-known concerns of their seniors in the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS),[16] played a very important role in empowering the radical and ill-informed ideas of political elites within the Department of Defense. This state of affairs was perhaps personified by the role of General Franks who made clear to his subordinate commanders, just a week after Baghdad had been taken by US forces, that a rapid drawdown of American military units would occur in the following months.[17] The surprise created by Franks' announcement on April 16, 2003 among senior operational commanders has been documented well by Gordon and Trainor who note, "McKiernan's chief of staff, was dumbfounded by Franks's emphasis on a speedy U.S. troop withdrawal" because "if Franks's guidance was carried out, the more than 140,000 troops in Iraq could be down to little more than a 'division-plus,' about 30,000 troops, by September."[18] The decision to downsize the number of US forces in Iraq certainly was highly unexpected by the key military commanders who had fought and won the campaign, notwithstanding the counterproductive contributions of Franks and Rumsfeld during the planning and execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The level of American political elite interference in the immediate post-war situation facing US forces included stopping the arrival of important reinforcements of manpower, notably the entire 1st Cavalry Division and its 16,000 personnel, on April 21, 2003.[19] The decision taken by Rumsfeld to "off-ramp"[20] the division and endorsed by Franks stemmed from the mistaken and flawed assumption held within political elites in the Department of Defense that the US should not need more troops to win the peace than the amount that had done the fighting.[21] Ignorance about post-stability military operations in devastated war zones by policy makers with no direct experience in these matters located in Washington was determining the structure and capabilities of US forces on the ground in Iraq as the situation was beginning to rapidly deteriorate. In the absence of strong military leadership, long-distance political elite interference would seriously impede the construction of viable and sustainable solutions to the spiraling environment of social disorder in Iraq.

The contribution of the most senior military commander responsible for the situation in Iraq or General Franks in the vital weeks/months following the destruction of Saddam's regime demands particular attention in terms

of explaining the rapid disintegration of US military control in Iraq. It is striking that having won an incredibly swift victory in Iraq Franks did not appear to have a great deal of interest in securing the success. All military personnel of any rank know that winning a tactical action of whatever size, firefight, skirmish, or battle is not akin to winning a war. This is the proverbial 101 of military strategy, and tactical success alone is not enough to secure strategic victory. Yet, Franks appeared to lose focus on this vital aspect of the campaign that would have deadly consequences for his command in Iraq. The explanations for his unusual behavior are numerous. Conventional accounts indicate that the lack of attention to the threat posed by irregular forces merely mirrored Franks' distain for them during the initial attack on Iraq.[22] They simply did not appear to register as a major concern for him. Others point toward more factors that are located more in the human dimension of military affairs and social practices. Franks was on the verge of retirement, and perhaps like many military officers coming toward the end of his tour of duty, the general appeared to lose interest in something that was going to be no longer his problem. Ricks provides the sharpest insight into this interpretation and records that "at the top of the chain of command for operations in Iraq, Gen. Franks seemed quickly to have detached from Iraq issues. Some of those who worked with him found him remote and even out of touch in the weeks after the fall of Baghdad. Franks was getting ready to retire."[23] To what extent this was a failure of US military practices, of allowing key personnel to rotate out of theater or even retire at a critical times remains open to question. In his memoirs, General Franks mentions that he informed the Secretary of Defense of his decision to retire in "late April"[24] with his actual handover of command occurring on July 7, 2003.[25] From the initial decision to actual retirement effectively amounted to over two months of the critical transition period in Iraq when the nascent insurgency developed momentum. As such, military practices of allowing a commander, who has clearly expressed a desire to leave office in post for an extended period of time before appointing a successor, were a significant contributory factor to the weakening grip of senior military management in CENTCOM's theaters of operations. The paucity of strong military leadership at the top of the chain of command at CENTCOM in the initial weeks and months after the fall of Saddam's regime was in retrospect a conspicuous factor in the deterioration of the situation on the ground. It considerably widened the gap between military conquest and complete control of the country, but to a significant extent the relatively small numbers of soldiers available to US commanders in Iraq meant that notions of tight control of the social and geographical space in Iraq were illusory. All of these elements contributed greatly to generating an environment that was conducive for the emergence of an insurgency in Iraq.

The power vacuum

The forced transition by external intervention from tightly controlled authoritarian state under a brutal dictator such as Saddam Hussein to newly "liberated" entity was inevitably going to be a radical societal and systemic shock for Iraq. Saddam had ruled Iraq officially for almost a generation[26] and ruthlessly purged or eliminated all challengers to his grip on power on a regular basis throughout his reign. Through his Ba'ath Party, Saddam ensured that his influence was felt evenly across Iraq and across the various social layers and sectarian divides in the country as well as "reaching down to the smallest village."[27] Literally, overnight, this larger-than-life leader whose images and cult of personality[28] dominated and adorned, through pictures and statues, the streets, towns, and cities of Iraq suddenly was no longer around. From total societal control to nothing in an instant, the effect on Iraqi society was dramatic once the realization dawned on ordinary citizens that the controlling national influence was gone. In this light, the events that occurred in Iraq following the fall of Saddam's regime were a predictable mixture of societal tensions in Iraq being released after decades of suppression by a brutal tyrant. The most visible manifestation of this rapid societal emancipatory effect was the almost instant outbreaks across Iraq of widespread looting by impoverished Iraqis. The decades of repression by Saddam had consolidated the power of people in the hands of the few who became wealthy as a result. In addition, two major wars, that is, the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and the Gulf War of 1991, in combination with a decade of UN sanctions had left the vast majority of ordinary citizens in Iraq materially disadvantaged. So the outbreak of looting was to be expected when any regime dominated by such a repressive clique and facing the long-term economic hardships of Iraq was destroyed.

The widespread looting of public buildings, critical state infrastructure, and private property appeared to take the US administration by surprise. This was admitted by George Bush in his memoirs that "there was one important contingency for which we had not adequately prepared. In the weeks after liberation, Baghdad descended into a state of lawlessness."[29] His National Security Council (NSC) advisor, Condoleezza Rice, was a little more candid and noted in her recollections that "the joy of the liberation was short-lived. There was widespread looting, perhaps to be expected immediately after the overthrow of a hated dictator."[30] It was remarkable that political elites in Washington could not imagine with the destruction of the security mechanisms by coalition forces as a direct result of the invasion of Iraq that social chaos would not ensue. Furthermore, the rapidly deteriorating situation on the ground was not helped by key members of the Bush administration regularly dismissing its significance in public forums. The best example was Donald Rumsfeld's appraisal of

the situation as "stuff happens" in one of his press conferences and that "freedom's untidy."[31] Rumsfeld admits his comments were "a mistake,"[32] but also reveals in his defense that other matters were pressing at the time and that his wife was ill, adding further pressure to his busy life.[33] Equally, the Secretary of Defense casts the net of blame far and wide for the situation in Iraq, including the State Department,[34] the president,[35] "the way the United States government is organized,"[36] and General McKiernan,[37] the officer who made the victory on the ground possible in the first place. Aside from this almost unique perspective, in reality, the looting represented a major obstacle to the fragile US plans for the reconstruction of Iraq and controlling the country in the post-Saddam era. One of the critical services that suffered in this respect was that of electricity generation. In a country that endures temperatures in excess of 40°C in the summer, electricity was vital for powering air conditioning units and, of course, maintaining the capability within all households of preserving fresh food on a daily basis through running essential refrigerators and freezers. During the campaign against Saddam's regime, the electricity grid had virtually collapsed due to unplanned consequences of the targeting strategy that, while avoiding explicitly knocking out the grid, had hit some minor or what was thought so aspects of it which had contributed to the already "fragile system" breaking down.[38] The major problem for the post-war attempts to restart the system was that looters attacked the vital control centers and "even the transmission lines, which contained copper and aluminum, were stolen."[39] By failing to ensure the security of essential services and protecting the vital infrastructure of Iraq, the Pentagon in essence generated the conditions for further social collapse and chaos. The shortage of troops meant that it was virtually impossible for the occupation forces to generate sufficient social control to prevent further damage to Iraq's already precarious and often failing infrastructure, but without strong direction from senior political and military elites, the available forces did not make stopping the looting a priority. Donald Rumsfeld admits in his memoirs that "intelligence had not prepared CENTCOM and interagency planners for an entire infrastructure that was crumbling at its foundation,"[40] but this is an extraordinary statement in view that any informed observer prior to the invasion of Iraq would have been well aware of the inherent problems of invading a state that was effectively bankrupt a decade earlier. It casts a very dim light on senior planners in Washington and at CENTCOM for not seeking or taking the advice of State Department officials or academic experts on the state of the country.

The social chaos that consumed Iraq in the first few weeks and months after the fall of Saddam drew sharp attention to the wholly inadequate preparations and provision that the Pentagon had made for Phase IV operations or the post-fighting stage of operations. The head of what would become known as the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian

Assistance (ORHA), retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner who had headed humanitarian operations in the Kurdish region of Iraq in 1991 was only approached to do the job in "mid-January" 2003.[41] This perhaps is indicative of how small as a priority Phase IV operations were in Rumsfeld's Pentagon, almost an afterthought; however, the late stage that it was handed over to General Garner severely limited his ability to generate a comprehensive package of measures, especially in view of the strained relationship with the State Department, the natural institution for this sort of operation. The incredibly difficult situation that faced General Garner and the ORHA when they arrived on the ground in Baghdad is summarized neatly by Gordon and Trainor who note of the key ministries that they were "ransacked and looted. Communication systems were in shambles" and "in its zeal to knock Saddam and his propaganda broadcasts off the air – and to surrender the regime's ability to command its forces – the U.S. had in effect disabled what Garner now needed."[42] The lack of coordination between military efforts to defeat Saddam and the essential post-war efforts to stabilize the country was at the heart of the difficulties of the fledgling ORHA in trying to meet some of the country's most pressing needs in a very short space of time. From electricity generation to communications and basic services such as sewage treatment,[43] Iraq was on the verge of becoming a failed state just as the United States assumed control of the country.

The dominant "mindset" in Washington

An extraordinary failure of imagination among American political/military elites and their social practices were important contributors to the creation of a multi-dimensional insurgency in Iraq. Political elites such as President Bush in the White House and Donald Rumsfeld at the Pentagon combined, unwittingly in the former case, to create a dominant mindset or social perception in which key decisions were being made in isolation to established protocol, structures or to experts who could help to generate a balanced approach. Instead, the dominant social perception ensured that crucial decisions were being foundationally informed by dogma and faith-based strategy/fantasy and at the same time insulated these decision makers from seeing the true situation on the ground in Iraq, which did not support this shared illusion. Equally, military elites, through either the bypassed JCS or compliant/disengaged theater commanders in CENTCOM, did not provide a fail-safe mechanism or any form of warning/braking system, if indeed such indicators would have been heeded by the Pentagon, to this all-encompassing social perception that would inevitably contribute to short- and long-term military failure in Iraq. Consequently, in the face of all the available evidence, American political and military elites did not respond effectively to the rapidly changing

situation in Iraq because it did not fit with or sufficiently challenge their common perspective to the point of requiring a re-evaluation. This is testimony to the strength and reliance of a dominant social perception in Washington and fits well with Janis' concept of "mindguards" in group dynamics when "members of a cohesive in-group suppress deviational points of view by putting social pressure on any member who begins to express a view that deviates from the dominant beliefs of the group."[44] There is no evidence to suggest that within Rumsfeld's inner circle of advisors and assistants such as Wolfowitz, Feith, or Cambone, there was any deviation from the overarching opinion about the Iraq project in its initial stages. The high levels of ideological commonality between these political elites ensured that the reality foundations of the group and the direction of Pentagon policies would not be fundamentally challenged unless key decision makers were removed from office.

This mindset among civilian political elites was also reinforced by a careful selection process of top commanders from military elites who would be in a position to influence policy decisions in relation to ideologically motivated projects such as Iraq—the appointment of two acquiescent Chairmen of the JCS in the form of General Richard Myers and his replacement, General Peter Pace, from the US Marine Corps. Of the latter officer, Ricks notes "Pace had proven a weak chairman, seemingly unwilling to stand up to Rumsfeld when other generals thought he should and instead trying to simply ease the discord at the Pentagon between uniformed military and its civilian overseers."[45] This approach also extended down the chain of command to the top military officer at CENTCOM, General Abizaid, and several senior commanders in Iraq, notably Generals Sanchez and Casey, none of whom publicly disagreed with Rumsfeld and shared the same goal of trying to reduce the number of US forces in Iraq, but for different reasons. Whereas Rumsfeld was committed to the transformation of war project and the avoidance of nation building wherever possible, military commanders such as General Abizaid, who replaced Franks as senior commander of CENTCOM, saw the presence of US forces in Iraq as part of the problem. According to Bob Woodward, "Abizaid had concluded that the United States' armed presence in Iraq on such a large scale for so many years was doing more harm than good."[46] In this respect, the opinions of political elites and military elites on the ground in Iraq dovetailed from different directions over the same problem, which produced the same effect as compliance. Only new military commanders from outside of the Rumsfeldian choice selection of senior officers with a different vision of how to conduct operation in Iraq would produce an alternative course of direction.

Counter-insurgency is a method by conventional forces to tackle the outbreak of violence to an imposed (often external) social order.

The insurgency

The gradual outbreak of the insurgency in Iraq was perhaps the worst-possible outcome for US political and military elites in Washington and Tampa because it sharply exposed the shallow strategic and conceptual foundations of the entire adventure. Operation Iraqi Freedom was purely designed to defeat the Iraqi armed forces and remove Saddam Hussein with a rapid drawdown of American forces thereafter. In some respects, it was an exercise in military and political naivety. American planners appeared to hope that notwithstanding the destruction of the law and order mechanisms in Iraq and the inevitable damage that would occur to critical infrastructure such as power generation and food distribution, people would somehow engage in self-regulation and continue their lives as normal. Additionally, to make matters worse, it was not a homogeneous insurgency and was constituted from a variety of different actors and groups, many of whom had very different agendas, from resistance fighters to criminal gangs, to foreign jihadists to Ba'ath party remnants, all combined loosely to attack American forces in the country. Steven Metz suggests, "an insurgency is born when a governing power fails to address social or regional polarization, sectarianism, endemic corruption, crime, various forms of radicalism, or rising expectations."[47] It was perhaps unavoidable that some form of insurgency/resistance would have broken out against the coalition forces regardless of the levels of planning and provision for Phase IV operations, but the sheer ineptitude of the American preparations and activities on the ground in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the incumbent regime undoubtedly intensified a multifarious insurgency exponentially. Dodge, an expert on Iraq, at an early stage of the spiraling violence identified "five separate sources" of the insurgency that spanned "industrial scale criminal gangs" to violence stemming from "Iraqi Islamism."[48] However, over time the sheer number of different actors multiplied considerably, often with competing aims, especially when sectarian fighting broke out on a large scale between the Sunni and Shia communities that peaked between 2005 and 2007. The Iraqi insurgency against the predominantly American and British coalition forces was a complex blend of different actors with quite separate agendas that competed for domination of political, social, and material space within a deeply divided, fractured, and ethnically diverse society.

Five stages of US strategy in Iraq

In her groundbreaking, albeit highly controversial work, on grief, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross identifies five key stages that include denial, anger, bargaining,

depression, and acceptance[49] and this mirrored very well US strategy in Iraq from 2003 to 2008. It roughly corresponds with the approach or nonapproach at times of the Bush administration to the problems on the ground and also encompasses an unusual external intervention event that has become known as "the surge," which resulted in a significant additional redeployment of US forces, predominantly in Baghdad in 2007. The last phase includes the Obama administration's withdrawal of all US forces in 2011. The shifts in US strategy reflected the growing realization that US forces in Iraq had to transform themselves from a Cold War-style fighting institutions geared toward open conventional warfare against similar forces into a COIN force and revisit the traumas of wars gone by such as the Vietnam War in which US forces had struggled to master this highly complex form of warfare. To a significant extent, had the US armed forces and society realized at the outset that operations in Iraq would evolve into a vicious and complex COIN campaign along the lines of the deeply unpopular war in Southeast Asia in the 1960s and early 1970s, support for the campaign would have evaporated. Instead, the armed forces of the United States, especially the US Army and US Marine Corps, were forced to transform themselves under fire and conduct a revision of concepts, tactics, and strategy while holding the line in Iraq. This has been one of the remarkable yet often overlooked aspects of the Iraq campaign: how quickly the US armed forces adapted to the situation and far outstripped their more experienced coalition partners, the United Kingdom, in particular, in terms of thinking and practices. It is an excellent example of how armies can adapt and learn in warfare under the most pressing and difficult circumstances while taking significant casualties and facing mounting domestic opposition to the war on the home front.

Stage 1: Denial—there is no insurgency

An extraordinary aspect of the initial US occupation of Iraq was the refusal of political elites within the Bush administration to accept that the growing violence and social chaos consuming Iraq after the fall of Saddam actually represented the start of an insurgency. Many of the worst incidents were dismissed by key policy makers in the Pentagon as isolated groups just causing trouble. Donald Rumsfeld famously described them as "dead-enders"[50] or "hangovers from the old regime."[51] In other words, it was just a few pockets of resistance left over from the combat operations. In reality, however, the warning signs were being picked up by various experts who urged the Bush administration to deploy more troops in order to ensure the stability of Iraq. One such report that indicated a figure of up to 500,000 troops[52] was provided by the RAND Corporation and given to the new head of the Coalition Provisional Authority or CPA, Paul Bremer, which

replaced the ORHA. According to a subsequent report, "Bremer was stunned by this analysis and sent a summary of the report to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, but he received no reply."[53] Even their British coalition partners were receiving very bad news about the situation in Iraq when one of their senior ambassadors in the region, John Sawers, visited the country and reported back that "the ORHA operation was a 'shambles,' with no grip on the details of reconstruction or Iraqi politics."[54] By July 2003, the new commander of CENTCOM, General John Abizaid, finally "admitted that attacks against American troops in the country bear the hallmarks of a 'classic guerrilla-type campaign.'"[55] Donald Rumsfeld notes in his memoirs that his caution stemmed from a desire not "to label the enemy inaccurately or give it legitimacy that it didn't deserve."[56] However, Abizaid's admission did reflect a growing awareness, including in Washington, of the true strategic situation facing coalition forces in Iraq. In November 2003, the CIA produced a classified report "known as an AARDWOLF" that encompassed the rapidly spiraling situation in Iraq. Linda Robinson provides a revealing insight into how the report was received:

> The meeting had barely begun when Rumsfeld interrupted, insisting that there was no insurgency. A White House military aide bravely offered the Pentagon's official definition of insurgency as a group seeking the overthrow of a government. Bremer did not dispute the CIA report. Bush cut short the substantive discussion. He was angry that the AARDWOLF had been leaked to the media. 'I don't want to see anyone commenting in the press about an insurgency,' he said. 'We have an election to win'.[57]

This snapshot of how the key decision makers in the Bush administration responded to one of the most important warning lights from the premier intelligence agency of the state with regard to the true situation in Iraq provides a window on the thinking of the administration at the time. First, it demonstrated that internal political practices and interests within the United States carried far more weight than an external crisis, notwithstanding that the latter was costing the lives of American soldiers whereas the former stakes merely concerned the careers of politicians. Second, it revealed how quickly key political leaders in the Pentagon were intent on stifling debate about this critical issue, even though it carried with catastrophic consequences for their immediate personnel. Third, it showed how easily it was for civilian political elites to disconnect from military elites within the United States. In this respect, this situation fits very well within Graham Allison's conception of a "governmental politics paradigm."[58] As Allison explains, "the decisions and actions of governments are intranational political resultants: *resultants* in the sense that what happens is not chosen as a solution to a problem but rather results from compromise, conflict, and confusion of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence."[59] The

refusal to acknowledge the obvious state of affairs in Iraq for personal and political interests with the Bush administration carried with it far-reaching consequences for US military effectiveness in terms of dealing with the growing violence in Iraq. By not accepting that an insurgency had broken out against the occupation, it meant that US forces did not adopt, from the very earliest stage, a dedicated COIN strategy. It would take the US armed forces and political elites four years before implementing a dedicated COIN strategy and, in that time, it allowed the various elements within Iraq's unique insurgency to gain purchase within society and to generate chaos and levels of violence never before experienced in the history of the country. The upshot of the strategy vacuum in Washington and Tampa was utterly devastating for the citizens of Iraq and it has been estimated by international bodies that over two million Iraqis, many of whom part of the critical middle-class infrastructure of professionals, fled the country[60] and the same amount of people became internally displaced as a result of the violence.[61] Equally, however, it significantly enhanced the dangers to American forces in Iraq because they were not geared or equipped toward fighting an insurgency. Put simply, thousands of American soldiers would die in the immediate years after the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime because political and military elites in Washington and Tampa would not grasp the nettle of the Iraqi insurgency.

Collateral damage is a military term for unintended harm to civilians during military operations.

Stage 2: Anger

The failure of the US administration to recognize and accept the existence of a growing insurgency in Iraq was compounded by what can be best described as a "lashing out" policy response to the increasing instability in the country. Consequently, the anger of US political elites at the spiraling violence and rapidly increasing casualties among US forces in Iraq was expressed in a variety of overt and covert ways. The most visible manifestation of hostility to the apparent lack of gratitude of Iraqi society to American efforts to "liberate" them was evident in the authorization of massive military or kinetic operations against urban centers of resistance with the most notable being the two separate attacks on the city of Fallujah in 2004. The precursor event that led to the first attack on Fallujah in April 2004 was the ambush and slaying of four Blackwater contractors in the city. One of the noteworthy aspects of the US approach to the occupation of Iraq was the proliferation of private contractors used by the US administration and the CPA to conduct tasks that traditionally would have fallen with the remit of military forces. It is estimated that by

2004 around 20,000 contractors were working in Iraq.[62] The extent of dependency on contractors was extraordinary as Deborah Avant explains "when the US won a resounding victory against the Iraqi Army in 2003, one out of every ten people it deployed to the theatre during the conflict were employed by private security companies (PSCs)."[63] The increased dependency of US military forces on contractors accelerated with the end of the Cold War and, for some, "the use of PSCs is often regarded as a lower political commitment."[64] In other words, the political risk of using contractors as opposed to US soldiers was substantially less, especially in terms of its impact on public opinion and support for foreign policy. These faceless contractors, though usually former soldiers, attired in a peculiar mix of civilian and military clothing with often as good, if not better, personal weaponry than the average US soldier ostensibly seemed to carry less political and social capital if losses/casualties occurred.

The Blackwater incident on March 31, 2004 in which the bodies of the four contractors were mutilated by an angry mob of Iraqi fighters before parts of the bodies were hung from a bridge in Fallujah and filmed for the entire world to see undermined this assumption dramatically. The Bush administration did not perceive the contractors as less important and more disposable assets, but rather as "Americans" who had been brutally set upon. Interestingly, military elites on the ground perceived the attack on the Blackwater employees as exactly what it was "a ploy designed to provoke a massive retaliation"[65] and advocated a sensible plan of action that would carefully bring the perpetrators to justice.[66] However, political elites in Washington, wary of public opinion at home, wanted an immediate and hardball response that simply did not grasp the negative effects of such actions within an insurgency environment. As Ricks reveals, the US Marines under General Mattis with responsibility for Fallujah did not want to conduct such an operation, "'Mattis wanted to do a police operation: 'Let's find out who did this, and get them; this is a city of three hundred thousand in which a few hundred people did something,' said another Marine general. 'The answer was: 'No, go in there with the power of a Marine division.'"[67] The upshot was a hasty assault on Fallujah by the US Marines that is estimated to have led to death of around 600 people over the course of several weeks.[68] The second battle for Fallujah in November 2004 because the first battle in April was inconclusive was a more deliberate and prepared operation. The city ended up being virtually evacuated before the assault and the US Marines built up a vast stockpile of logistics and "some eleven million rounds of ammunition were brought in."[69] The effect on the city is best illustrated by the raw statistics of heavy ordnance dumped on Fallujah, "overall the Marines fired four thousand artillery rounds and ten thousand mortar shells into the city, while warplanes dropped ten tons of bombs. At least two thousand buildings were destroyed and another ten

thousand were badly damaged."[70] The assaults and methodology behind Fallujah were by no means unique, and the heavy-handed approach to operations encapsulated the anger of US political elites, far removed from the battlespace, determining the character of military operations against the insurgents in Iraq.

Covert actions, directed by political elites through the mechanisms of military forces and private contractors in Iraq, also displayed visceral anger toward the resistance to occupation in Iraq. The scandal over the photos that came out of Abu Ghraib prison in 2004 revealed, notwithstanding official denial that US political elites had sanctioned forms of torture as a means of trying to overcome the insurgency. Some sources indicate that Donald Rumsfeld and other elements, especially Stephen Cambone, the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence within the Department of Defense, initiated a top-secret torture and blackmail initiative to try and infiltrate the Iraqi resistance movements in Iraq. According to Seymour Hersh who helped to break the story of the prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib in 2004, by the latter part of 2003 with the violence out of control in Iraq and the administration still largely unaware as to the foundations of the insurgency, "something had to be done to change the dynamic."[71] Hersh reveals, "the solution, endorsed by Rumsfeld and carried out by Stephen Cambone, was to get tough with those Iraqi prisoners who were suspected of being insurgents. The Army prison system would now be asked to play its part."[72] The scandalous and self-defeating behavior of US soldiers and contractors toward Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib prison, a notorious place of torture under Saddam Hussein, was an extraordinary phase in the Iraq ad hoc COIN effort because it helped to fan the flames of resistance against the US occupation forces who had completely lost any form of moral authority or high ground in relation to the previous regime. It also reflected the levels of self-defeating responses that US political elites would descend to with regard venting their anger at the Iraqi resistance.

Stage 3/4: Bargaining and depression

In her study of "Death and Dying," Elisabeth Kübler-Ross makes the case that the various "stages do not replace each other but can exist next to each other and overlap at times."[73] This was the case with US political and military elites and their responses to the unfolding situation in Iraq that was reaching a peak of violence between 2005 and 2007. What occurred within US decision-making circles from 2005 onwards was quite remarkable and demonstrated that outside intervention, endogenous trends within military elites and the removal of key personnel in the administration were critical to the emergence of a radical new approach to the issue of the insurgency

in Iraq. All of these elements swirled around the quite evident fact that by 2006 US strategy was on the brink of failure in Iraq.[74] Social chaos consumed the country and violence was reaching new levels of extremity in terms of US casualties with 1,105 killed between summer 2006 and summer 2007.[75] The levels of violence were simply breathtaking. As one observer records, "during the winter of 2005–2006, there had been about 500 attacks a week on U.S. and allied forces. By late in the summer of 2006, there were almost 800" and "the bombings continued like a daily drumbeat, contributing to the capital's monthly civilian death toll of about 1,000."[76] US political elites within the Bush administration had effectively run out of answers to the endless cycles of violence in Iraq and, by 2006, the most prominent hawks for the intervention could plainly see that the project was sliding into an abyss. The most notable of these was Donald Rumsfeld and one commentator noted of a meeting with him in the fall of 2006 that "there was a general resignation about him that I'd never seen."[77] For Rumsfeld, the mounting dead and wounded among US soldiers, just over 3,000 dead by the end of 2006,[78] and the almost unaccountable losses among Iraq's civilian population brought the flaws in his vision of a swift war followed by a rapid rehabilitation of the country with a minimal US military presence into sharp focus. His pre-war critics, experts in military affairs, area studies, and the State Department, had all proved to be vindicated while his grip on the situation in Iraq, which was never strong in the first place, was visibly getting weaker. As time passed bloodily on the ground in Iraq, Rumsfeld became less and less of an influential stakeholder among US political elites because failure would condemn them all to the political wilderness. Increasingly from 2006 onwards, powerful decisions concerning defense matters related to Iraq were made around him. The American system of government and the relationship between military and political elites effectively broke down during the Iraq insurgency. Rumsfeld's systematic undermining of established procedures and manipulation of appointments alongside of a compliant and hands-off managerial approach by President Bush negated the ability of military experts to generate an effective strategy in Iraq. Bob Woodward provides a snapshot of the difficulties that beset relationships between civil and military elites by 2006:

> In weekly secure videoconferences with the president, Casey had tried to drum home the point that they needed to reduce forces. Casey's boss up the chain of command, General John Abizaid, the head of U.S. Central Command, who sat in on the conferences, shared Casey's view. Though video didn't have the intimacy of face-to-face meetings, Abizaid watched Bush carefully – the nods, the expressions, the president's impatient dance in his chair as he listened. After the videoconferences, Casey and Abizaid, both students of Bush's body language, often compared notes.

'What do you think?' Casey asked more than once. 'Did we get through today?'

'Oh no, I don't think so,' Abizaid would reply.[79]

Military elites in CENTCOM had effectively become resigned to the fact that the presence of US troops in Iraq was a significant part of the problem[80] and a drawdown of troops was probably the best course of action. Conversely, some political elites appeared to think that US forces could kill their way out of the problem[81]—a worrying reminder of the body count obsession during the Vietnam War. By 2006, US policy in Iraq was enveloped in inertia caught between these two extreme perceptions between US political and military elites and the "system" had in fact ground to a halt while events of the ground in Iraq were shaping the long-term outcome.

Bargaining for a solution

The strategic and policy impasse was broken by a number of elements that came together. One of these was in the form of an unexpected outside intervention by a retired yet highly influential member of US military elite circles, General Jack Keane. General Keane was a well-known insider having retired from the US military as Vice Chief of the US Army in 2003, despite having been offered the position of Chief of the Army by Donald Rumsfeld, but Keane turned it down on compassionate grounds in order to care for his ill wife.[82] It was the impetus and pressure from an outside agent through meetings with the Secretary of Defense,[83] the Chairman of the JCS,[84] and eventually, the President[85] that contributed to a rapid change in strategy in Iraq. This course direction, however, was only possible in the light of a radically altered political situation in Washington when the Democratic Party won control of both Congress and the Senate in an emphatic victory in the mid-term elections of November 2006. The political fallout for the Bush Administration was encapsulated by the subsequent replacement of Donald Rumsfeld and the appointment of Robert Gates as his successor. This single event, a day after the sweeping success of the Democratic Party, opened up the possibility of a change of direction in Iraq. Other endogenous pressures also contributed toward moving the consensus within the Bush presidency toward a new approach in Iraq. An internal report within the Pentagon, authorized by General Pace shortly after meeting General Keane,[86] by an influential group of colonels, who had all served in Iraq, considered possible options. It was remarkable that the Chairman of the JCS felt it was necessary to generate his own picture of the situation rather than rely on the advice of CENTCOM commanders in Tampa and on the ground in Iraq. It is indicative that the Secretary of Defense/CENTCOM

axis that had marginalized the role of the JCS was now—finally—being challenged by the authorized decision-making structures of the military elites. Linda Robinson provides an excellent overview of the four options "the Council of Colonels"[87] set out:

> Go Big, Go Home, Go Long. A fourth option was a hybrid of the first and third. Go Big envisioned a large increase in troops, which they eventually concluded was unfeasible because the United States lacked the available manpower. Go Home, total withdrawal, was discarded as likely to leave Iraq with a full-blown civil war. Deliberations then boiled down to two options: Go Long, shifting to a long-term advisory presence at lower troop levels, and the hybrid variation that would include a short-term increase in troops to try to get the sectarian violence under control, followed by a drawdown to some 60,000 troops from roughly 140,000.[88]

Alongside of this radical thinking, another endogenous trend was at play that would significantly influence the new approach to operations in Iraq. From 2006 onwards, the US Army and US Marines started work under the direction of Lieutenant General David Petraeus, an unusual officer with a PhD from Princeton, on a new COIN manual that would become known as *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* when it was first published in December 2006.[89] The production of the manual was an atypical process and drew upon a wide body of experts from outside the military, "representatives from the CIA and the State Department, academics, human rights advocates, even a select group of high-profile journalists"[90] alongside of key officers drawn from different parts of the armed forces. The new manual was a visible manifestation of how armed forces can learn in warfare, and the intellectual deficit displayed by American military in Iraq with regard to COIN warfare was sharply addressed with this publication. In many respects, it reflected how quickly military institutions can transform their ideational foundations with regard to prosecuting a particular kind of war and, to a large degree, the US armed forces rewrote the manual with the production of this publication. Nevertheless, this was an internal trend within the US armed forces that was apparent before the decision to adopt a radically new approach to the fighting in Baghdad was taken. Put simply, on the home front within the armed forces and in Washington, a bargaining atmosphere of how to tackle Iraq emerged from a variety of diverse directions that ultimately shifted the direction of US strategy. Conversely, in the Pentagon under Rumsfeld and at CENTCOM/Iraq (Abizaid and Casey) the mood was one of depression and how to extract US forces out of the failing situation as quickly as possible. By the end of 2006, it was clear that the various bargaining trends would win the debate.

The surge

There was a great deal of internal resistance to the surge from within the military establishment, especially those senior officers who had spent years working alongside of Donald Rumsfeld or were appointees of the previous regime. This is not to suggest that they shared Rumsfeld's peculiar outlook on Iraq, but years of working within an organizational climate dominated by a micromanager of a Secretary of Defense carried with it a certain cost. For those who had spent a long period of time such as General Abizaid and Casey enduring such an arduous relationship with interfering political elites in relation to the troubles in Iraq, it begs the question of whether negative Pavlovian conditioning occurred in relation to what they thought was possible on the ground. Certainly, there is enough evidence to indicate that these generals were very much against the concept of the surge;[91] however, the organizational climate within the Pentagon had changed decisively with the appointment of Robert Gates. Within days of taking office, Gates accelerated the retirement of General Abizaid, oversaw the replacement of General Casey in Iraq, and removed the Secretary of the Army and the Army Surgeon General in the spring over the poor treatment of wounded soldiers. By the summer of 2007, General Pace would be replaced and the following year, the head of CENTCOM, Admiral Fallon who lost his job over disagreements with the administration along with the Chief of the Air Force and the Air Force Secretary officially for the "loose" management of nuclear weapons.[92] It was Gates who created the conditions for the surge with an extra 21,500 troops[93] announced on January 10, 2007 and five brigades allocated to Baghdad as well as the appointment of the new COIN guru, General Petraeus, as commander of the Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I) to replace General Casey with Lieutenant General Ray Odierno as his deputy. It was a seminal moment that required a new political atmosphere in Washington, a new Secretary of Defense, a new commander of CENTCOM, and a new Commander in Iraq in addition to new thinking about COIN warfare within military institutions in order to alter the direction with regard to strategy in Iraq. Nevertheless, the new strategy was not a decisive option. The United States simply did not have enough manpower to inflict total control on Iraq, but it did enable them to get control of Baghdad and provide a limited amount of breathing space for political elites in Iraq to generate a workable medium-term future.

Stage 5: Acceptance—invading Iraq was a mistake

The surge in Iraq did generate the predicted effects of stabilizing, albeit in the short term, the political and social situation in predominantly Baghdad and also further afield in the country. It was designed partly to give Iraqi

political elites time to generate a reasonably stable political context broadly conceived. Stabilization in Baghdad involved the application of new thinking about COIN and, for the large part, these efforts have been very successful in the short term. It reflected an ideational and operational posture shift away from "enemy-centric"[94] operations in which the aim was to just kill terrorists or insurgents toward "population-centric approaches"[95] that aimed to protect the people. In addition, instead of operating from giant bases, what was known as "a super FOB [forward operating base]"[96] and essentially sallying out to deal with incidents or to conduct resupply missions in heavily armed convoys that naturally would attract IED attacks, a different approach was adopted. The flaws in the old system were manifold, from making US soldiers more vulnerable, not withstanding all their protection to taking away their situational awareness as to what was happening around them. It was and is impossible to obtain an accurate gauge of the scope and sense of an insurgency by traveling around an operational environment locked up in armored vehicles. In contrast, the surge, exploiting the additional manpower, established an extensive network of Joint Security Stations (JSS) and other strong points all over Baghdad to embed the soldiers and the protection they offered within the population. Having built up enough forces by the summer of 2007, the US command in Iraq went on the offensive against the various threats that faced them. As David Kilcullen, a participant in the operations, reveals that "the intent of these operations, collectively known as the Arrowhead series, was to clear several of the insurgents' safe havens simultaneously," and "although we had not done so on previous occasions, this time we planned to stay in these areas once they were secured."[97] By staying in the cleared areas, the US forces were extending their growing zone of stability and security in and around Baghdad to the benefit of themselves and the general population. Alongside of this tactical success, the US plan of action benefited from two unrelated sets of circumstances that have made the surge seem more successful than it actually was. The first concerned the Sunni tribal uprising or revolt, the so-called awakening against Al Qaeda-style terrorists and their emulators in specific provinces. This occurred as an independent variable to the surge. It was as a form of social struggle between the tribes and Al Qaeda types over primacy of tradition over power/religion with the latter trying to wrest the authority from the former.[98] Consequently, the Sunni tribes engaged in significant cooperation with US forces that also decreased the attacks on them considerably. Second, one of the most significant power brokers in Iraq, Muqtada al Sadr, and his Mahdi Army or Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) declared a cease-fire in late summer 2007.[99] This was a very sensible move in view that the JAM would be categorically destroyed in open conflict with the surged US forces in Iraq and, also by 2007, much of the ethnic cleansing of Baghdad had been completed.[100] The surge achieved its primary objective to stabilize Iraq, but for a temporary period only to provide space for local

Iraqi political elites to reach a sustainable accommodation that will ensure the future stability of the country. The long-term success of the surge has always remained open to question, and the return of levels of violence in Iraq to higher than pre-surge figures in 2013 suggests a negative trajectory for the future. Nevertheless, under a new US President, Barack Obama, the United States finally accepted the reality of the situation facing them in Iraq: military occupation was not a workable long-term solution and the new administration initiated a phased withdrawal strategy that brought all of the troops out of Iraq in 2011.

The British in Basra

The British experience in Iraq from 2003 to 2008 dovetails with the US experience until the surge, which marked a distinct split in approach to the situation in Iraq. In addition, the British in Basra ended up ceding ground completely to the insurgents and were ultimately asked to leave Iraq by the Maliki government—an inglorious end to a highly controversial campaign. The scope of operations for British forces in Iraq was governed by two key factors that were non-negotiable: first, it was not a unilateral mission and, second, as part of a multilateral effort, they were a junior partner to the United States that in the final analysis determined the course of the occupation. At the heart of the problem for the British armed forces deployed in Iraq was the fact that they were allocated responsibility for a territory, which was so vast that with the relatively smaller number of troops allocated to it, there was simply no chance of securing any form of domination. As Richard North reveals that Britain took over "Coalition Provincial Authority South, comprising the four southernmost provinces of Iraq: Basra, Muthanna, Maysan and Thi Qar. The sector was about 275 miles wide and 260 miles from north to south, covering some 60,000 square miles."[101] The city of Basra alone possessed around 1.3 million inhabitants[102] and within a month of the invasion its occupation force was reduced to around 11,000 personnel[103] to control a vast area. The resources never matched the commitment and much of the failings in the British experience in Iraq can be attributed to this core foundational shortcoming. Furthermore, the dual track/switch approach to major operations in Iraq and also Helmand province in Afghanistan from 2006 onwards made the fragile resources to commitments situation for the armed forces even worse to the point of "strategic failure"[104] in one or both theaters of operation.

British political elites, but particularly Tony Blair, were convinced of a rosy future of life in Iraq after the fall of Saddam,[105] essentially a faith-based strategy approach, that would prove dramatically out of sync with the reality on the ground. However, the prime minister was acutely aware that "a large part of opinion – public and most important media – is opposed"[106]

to the war in Iraq. This placed Britain's armed forces in an extraordinarily difficult position of being involved in a campaign that was deeply unpopular and widely considered as illegal in their own society. This stood in stark contrast to the widespread support that the American armed forces and President Bush enjoyed in the United States until the insurgency deepened and the casualties mounted. British military elites in the same manner as their American colleagues worked closely with political elites to empower government policies in Iraq. The rapid drawdown of British forces revealed deep-seated misconceptions among British political and military elites as to how Phase IV operations would unfold in Iraq. In addition, like American political elites, there was an unwillingness to grasp the true situation on the ground—what one commentator has described as "a culture of denial"[107] as the instability and violence began to take a firm grip on Iraqi society. For Blair and his close supporters, the situation in Iraq carried with it far more political ramifications than for the Americans because it was very much "their" war. Furthermore, the Iraq issue created a subsequent political storm over the failure to find weapons of mass destruction, and the events leading to the highly unusual death of a well-respected government scientist, Dr David Kelly, in July 2003 also consumed huge amounts of the Blair administration's time and energies. Another interesting feature of British civil military relations about strategy in Iraq was the noticeable split between elements of the military and political elites that was most apparent in 2006, particularly between the Chief of the General Staff, General Dannatt, whose service was carrying the brunt of the operations, and Tony Blair. General Dannatt in 2006 gave a controversial interview to the *Daily Mail* newspaper that carried the headline "WE MUST QUIT IRAQ SAYS NEW HEAD OF THE ARMY."[108] Tony Blair records in his memoirs that the gist of the article was "essentially saying that we had reached the end in Iraq, we were as much a risk to security as keeping it and we should transfer our attention to Afghanistan."[109] This incident perhaps captures the widening divide between military and political leaders over the situation in Iraq and what was achievable.

British military strategy in Iraq in the aftermath of the conquest faced a very different strategic context in the south that was out of sync with the American experience for roughly the first 18 months of the occupation. According to one senior British commander who commanded the British area of responsibility in the south from December 2003 onwards, initially "the main problem in my area was not security but governance and economy,"[110] but the security situation gradually became considerably worst by the end of his seven-month tour of duty.[111] This British situation initially remained more benign for much longer than the American situation around Baghdad and this perhaps created illusions that perhaps the United Kingdom was better at this type of operation than their US counterparts. This was however a false illusion: the insurgency took longer to break out in the south, but when it did

British forces struggled as much as their US coalition partners. For the British armed forces, the commitment to Iraq posed a number of difficult challenges. First, they simply did not have the resources to tackle a full-blown insurgency and by 2004, elements within influential British military circles, most notably Lieutenant General Robert Fry RM, Director of Operations at the Ministry of Defense, had successfully made the case to switch focus to Afghanistan. Jack Fairweather records of this decision that "Fry's argument to the defense chiefs was simple. The military's job was largely done in southern Iraq, and it was time to get out. At the same time the Afghan campaign was a mess."[112] Unfortunately, this fateful but very sensible decision in view of the strategic landscape at the time occurred just before the insurgency kicked off in the south of Iraq and so British forces found themselves in a short space of time dealing with two increasingly demanding military commitments with limited resources. As a consequence, the British Army was not adequately resourced to deal with the challenges of the insurgency in southern Iraq when it reached its heights between 2005 and 2006. Aside from the resource issues, the constant rotation of senior staff did not help the formulation of a consistent and coherent COIN campaign between 2004 and 2008. Fairweather notes that when General Richard Shirreff took over in Basra in 2006, "he was the eighth general to take command of the war in less than three years."[113] The British Army's approach in this time was very much in tune with its original intent: to train up Iraqi security forces until each province could be handed back, notwithstanding the upsurge in violence and the growing influence of Shia militia in Basra itself.

From a British military perspective, it was remarkable that there is little evidence of a learning curve process unlike their American counterparts. At the start of the insurgency, Britain's armed forces were widely acknowledged as "experts" in the field in view of their extraordinary track record of success in these campaigns. The success of Northern Ireland was often cited, yet the comparison was a false one and the COIN campaign in Iraq made the "troubles" appear in their true context or, in essence, a counter-terrorism operation against a small number of radical dissidents with some military grade equipment and techniques as opposed to the full-scale unconventional warfare around Basra. The British military steadily lost the military initiative in southern Iraq and it begs the question of why military elites did not adjust their thinking or acquire the necessary resources to hold the line effectively. This state of affairs draws into sharp focus the intimate links between societies and their armed forces. In the United Kingdom, from the first day of the war, a significant part of British citizenry did not support the action, but they did support the troops, and the descent into chaos in southern Iraq merely reinforced the negative perceptions of the occupation. If the war was lost among public opinion, then what incentives did British military elites have for turning a flawed and failing campaign around? Second, in view of the material constraints imposed on them, could British

military commanders have prevailed in southern Iraq? For whatever reason, there was no visible COIN doctrine revival among British military officers, no General Petraeus emerged from among their ranks, nor did a radical change in strategy occur on the ground, apart from one designed to get British forces out of theater as quickly as possible. Individual officers such as General Graeme Lamb were influential in Petraeus' circle in Baghdad, but British policy became fixed on withdrawal by the time the surge came about. The consequences of the fumbling British policy in Iraq, the denial by British political elites, and the disinterest of military elites were disastrous for ordinary Iraqi citizens who found themselves dominated by criminals, thugs, and militias. In a final humiliation for Britain policy and strategy, it was Iraqi soldiers assisted by American advisors who were forced to step in and reassert control in Basra, which the British had effectively lost. "The Charge of the Knights" operation in March 2008 and through the summer was a major success and made the remaining 4,000 British troops at Basra air station appear in the public perception to be inept, incompetent, and impotent. In effect, Britain was asked to leave Iraq by the Maliki government with the end of the UN mandate on December 31, 2009 by July 2009. The Iraq adventure was and remains one of Britain's most controversial operations in its military history.

American and British strategy in Iraq from 2003 to 2008 was dominated for much of this period until the last two years by an absence of grand strategy and poor planning with regard the day after Saddam fell from office. These elements allowed spiraling social chaos and disintegration to consume the bulk of Iraq with the exception of the Kurdish-dominated areas in a manner that made Saddam's excesses pale in comparison. Equally, it created fertile conditions for an extraordinarily complex and largely indigenous insurgency to develop that has proved to be hugely costly for American and British forces in both blood and treasure. For the US armed forces and, especially the US Army, a transformation in thinking toward COIN warfare occurred—a remarkable feat in view that it happened under combat conditions—during the occupation of Iraq, and the surge is the very manifestation of this change in thinking. For the British armed forces, there is no evidence of such transformation and, in contrast to their American coalition partner, they were effectively forced to leave the country in a humiliating withdrawal.

Questions

1. What was US grand strategy for Iraq in 2003 after the fall of Saddam Hussein and his regime?
2. Account for the outbreak of looting and social chaos in Iraq from April 2003 onwards.

3 Explain why the coalition forces were so unprepared for the so-called Phase IV reconstruction operations after the conquest of Iraq?
4 Why did it take the US military so long to adjust to the strategic reality of an insurgency in Iraq?
5 Assess the success of the so-called "surge" in Iraq.

Notes

1 Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 371.
2 Ibid., 375.
3 Adrian R. Lewis, *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London: Routledge, 2007), 432.
4 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 390.
5 Anthony Cordesman, "Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call." *CSIS Paper*, November 14, 2003, 2.
6 Ibid., 2–3.
7 David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009), 117.
8 Steven Metz, *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2008), xxiv.
9 Alastair Finlan, "Trapped in the Dead Ground: US Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Iraq." *Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 16, no. 1 (March 2005): 3.
10 See Bob Woodward, *State of Denial* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 126.
11 Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 272.
12 Metz, *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy*, xviii.
13 General Carl Strock cited in Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 463.
14 Irving L. Janis, *GroupThink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 3.
15 See Woodward, *State of Denial*, 126–128.
16 Especially General Shinseki, the US Army's Chief of Staff.
17 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 459.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 460–461.
20 Ibid., 461.
21 See Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 138.
22 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 501.
23 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 155.
24 General Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell, *American Soldier* (New York: Regan Books, 2004), 530.
25 Ibid., 533.

26 Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 213. Saddam was officially appointed president of Iraq in 1979 but his controlling influence was apparent many years before.
27 Ibid., 218.
28 Ibid., 217.
29 George Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Virgin Books, 2010), 257 (Kindle Edition).
30 Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
31 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 136.
32 Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 477 (Kindle Edition).
33 Ibid., 475 (Kindle Edition).
34 Ibid., 493 (Kindle Edition).
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 487 (Kindle Edition).
37 Ibid., 497 (Kindle Edition).
38 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 467.
39 Ibid., 467–468.
40 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 495–496 (Kindle Edition).
41 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 80.
42 Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 465.
43 Ibid.
44 Janis, *GroupThink*, 40.
45 Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General Petraeus and the Untold Story of the American Surge in Iraq, 2006–2008* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 43.
46 Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006–2008* (London: Pocket Books, 2009), 5.
47 Steven Metz, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq." *The Washington Quarterly*, 27, no. 1 (Winter 2003–2004): 26.
48 Toby Dodge, "A Sovereign Iraq?" *Survival*, 46, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 49–50.
49 The five stages draw inspiration from Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' five stages of grief (Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance). See Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their Own Families* (London: Routledge, 2009).
50 Seymour M. Hersh, "The Gray Zone: How a Secret Pentagon Program Came to Abu Ghraib." *The New Yorker*, May 24, 2004.
51 Finlan, "Trapped in the Dead Ground," 9.
52 Bruce R. Pirnie and Edward O'Connell, *Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003–2006)*, RAND COUNTERINSURGENCY STUDY VOL 2 (Santa Monica: Rand, 2008), 37.
53 Ibid.
54 John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: The Free Press, 2004), 334.
55 "US Faces Iraq 'Guerrilla War'." *BBC News*, July 16, 2003.
56 Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown*, 521 (Kindle Edition).
57 Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 4–5.
58 Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Longman, 1999), 294.

59 Ibid., 294–295.
60 See Anne Evans Barnes, "Realizing Protection Space for Iraqi Refugees: UNHCR in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon." *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No.167, UNHCR (January 2009): 15.
61 "Cash Pledged for Iraqi Refugees." *BBC News*, April 18, 2007.
62 See Julian Borger, "The Danger of Market Forces." *The Guardian*, May 6, 2004.
63 Deborah Avant, *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 1.
64 Ibid., 133.
65 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 332.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 See Hana Ibrahim, "Falluja Women Die by Snipers: Another Picture of Violating Iraqi Women's Rights to Life." *Iraq Occupation Watch*, April 17, 2004.
69 Ricks, *Fiasco*, 399.
70 Ibid., 402.
71 Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 59.
72 Ibid.
73 Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, 214.
74 This is an argument made by Thomas Ricks who asserts "in 2005 the United States came close to losing the war in Iraq." See Ricks, *The Gamble*, 8.
75 Ibid., 45.
76 Ibid., 55.
77 General Jack Keane on meeting Rumsfeld in 2006 cited in Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 31.
78 See icasualties.com, accessed November 8, 2009, http://www.icasualties.org/Iraq/index.aspx.
79 Woodward, *The War Within*, 5.
80 Ibid., 4–5.
81 Ibid., 4.
82 Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 30.
83 On September 19, 2006. See Ricks, *The Gamble*, 88.
84 A few days after meeting Rumsfeld on September 19, 2006. See Ricks, *The Gamble*, 89.
85 On December 11, 2006. See Ricks, *The Gamble*, 98.
86 Ibid., 90.
87 Ibid., 101.
88 Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 27.
89 *The US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, No. 3–24 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007).
90 Ricks, *The Gamble*, 24.
91 Ibid., 116–117.
92 Ibid., 115–116.
93 Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 43.
94 Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 129.

95 Ibid.
96 Ricks, *The Gamble*, 166.
97 Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla*, 144.
98 Ibid., 159–160.
99 Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends*, 316.
100 Ricks, *The Gamble*, 200.
101 Richard North, *Ministry of Defeat: The British War in Iraq 2003–2009* (London: Continuum, 2009), 15.
102 Ibid., 19.
103 Ibid.
104 This term was raised with the British high command in September 2005 after the dramatic rescue of two captured undercover SAS soldiers from the Iraqi police in Basra. See Jack Fairweather, *A War of Choice: The British in Iraq 2003–9* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2011) (Kindle Edition).
105 Kampfner, *Blair's Wars*, 325.
106 Tony Blair, *A Journey* (London: Hutchinson, 2010), 441 (Kindle Edition).
107 North, *Ministry of Defeat*, 26.
108 General Sir Richard Dannatt, *Leading from the Front* (London: Bantam Press, 2010) (Kindle Edition).
109 Blair, *A Journey*, 470 (Kindle Edition).
110 Andrew Stewart, "Southern Iraq 2003–2004: Multi-National Command" in *British Generals in Blair's Wars,* eds Jonathan Bailey, Richard Iron, and Hew Strachan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 81.
111 Ibid.
112 Fairweather, *A War of Choice* (Kindle Edition).
113 Ibid.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Contemporary military strategy and the Global War on Terror

The Global War on Terror or GWOT is the term used to describe the decade-long operations in Afghanistan and Iraq after 9/11. It is an unfashionable and much derided description, but it captures well this extraordinary episode in international relations.

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) as a term has begun to fade away in the popular lexicon, and the demise of this contested description was hardly surprising. Its shortcomings were obvious, especially the profoundly shallow ideational foundation about warfare on which it was constructed. It promised perhaps unwittingly, in the same manner as the ongoing war on drugs, an endless conflict in which victory remains immeasurable. Nevertheless, it captured well a moment in time when American and British forces were engaged in substantial combat activities in Afghanistan and Iraq from 2001 to the present day in the case of the former theater of operations. A decade plus of fighting has strongly influenced not only conceptions about contemporary military strategy but also the physical composition of armed forces in the United States and the United Kingdom. Take any soldier in either army in 2001 and compare them side by side with their equivalents today and they look in a material sense very different, from enhanced body armor to better weapons and mine-resistant vehicles. In addition, a generation of veterans has been produced in the West that have experienced some of the most intense combat in modern memory and their influence will be felt in the armed forces for at least the next 20 years. Together, these trends point to how armies and strategies adapt and change in relation to their environment and the counter-insurgency (COIN) warfare of recent years has been a harsh learning zone for military

establishments that prior to the twenty-first century were increasingly orientated toward humanitarian missions. From a social scientist's perspective studying the application of military strategy by the most powerful and best-equipped armed forces in the world, the first decade of the twenty-first century contains a rich vein of empirical material on how premier league military establishments fight wars. This research originally posed two central research questions back in 2005 that included the extent to which US/UK imagination about war was asymmetric with the new realities of transnational terrorism and twenty-first century warfare and to explain the reasons for why American and British forces have failed to defeat Al Qaeda and the insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq. With the passing of time, the answers to the questions have altered radically, not least of which, with the killing of Osama Bin Laden in May 2011 by US Navy Seals, from the famed Seal Team 6 unit. Nevertheless, the campaigns in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom) and in Iraq, otherwise known as Operation Iraqi Freedom, have provided a vast amount of material with regard to how US/UK military and political elites have constructed strategies and activities to fulfill or not the original intent of the missions in two geographically separated campaign theaters.

The declaration of a "war on terror" in the 9/11 attacks was an understandable but gross error of judgment on behalf of political elites in the United States and a failure of imagination to grasp the true character of the threat facing the nation. A new, untested, and controversially elected president while isolated on Air Force One, the presidential aircraft, in the immediate aftermath of the devastating events on September 11, 2001 "considered the attacks an act of war."[1] Tony Blair, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, watching the attacks unfold on live television, came to a remarkably similar conclusion that "there was no other course; no other option; no alternative path. It was war."[2] In the absence of wiser counsels invested with less political inexperience and weak intellectual rhetoric, 9/11 can be viewed as a mega-attack on the United States in view of the scope of destruction and the death toll, but foundationally, it was an act of terrorism perpetrated by a very small non-state actor called Al Qaeda. Attacks of this nature were, and are likely, to be a noticeable feature of the twenty-first century. The increasing dependency on key digital communications and control technologies such as the internet and fly-by-wire aircraft enables bigger and more capable aircraft such as the giant Airbus A380 that can carry over 500 passengers[3] to be flown with greater ease than ever before. Every aspect of life in the West, from power generation to essential critical services such as water and food distribution, is completely dependent on computerized systems and software that, if accessed by malign intent by small groups of individuals, can cause catastrophic damage, death, and destruction on magnitudes far beyond past experience. The future mega-attack may well

be virtual with no physical trace of the perpetrators, apart from lines of computer code, that, if combined with an exceptionally cold winter or a natural disaster, may cause a cascade effect, akin to the firestorms caused by Allied bombers in World War II in cities such as Hamburg and Dresden.[4] Nevertheless, two political leaders, by themselves, could not have decisively influenced the misguided direction of military forces in both Afghanistan and, subsequently, Iraq. The sheer shock effect of 9/11 and the international coverage of the strikes draws a sharp lens on the role of the media, wittingly and unwittingly, in priming American and British societies, to a greater and lesser degree, in generating a conducive environment for the application of force. Furthermore, the willingness of both political and military elites in empowering this radical new response was also an important element in its manifestation. With regard the respective military establishments on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and their innate positive approach to existence in general (the word "no" is rarely uttered in them because it is often a sign of weakness) helped play down the emergence of natural caveats to military action. One senior British general described it as a "'can do' manner"[5] that captures well a common trend in military organizations in the United States and Britain. A combination of factors, endogenous and exogenous, contributed to the policy formulation process, predominantly in the United States, but also in the United Kingdom that combined to coalesce around President Bush's gut reaction to the tragedy of 9/11.

Operation Enduring Freedom

With the establishment of 9/11 "as an act of war" master narrative in political establishments in the United States and the United Kingdom, imagination about responding to these attacks became markedly asymmetric and out of step in relation to the actual threat facing both countries. The most significant consequence of this thinking was the assignment of the task of destroying Al Qaeda to the military establishments of both countries that was a mission for which they were largely unsuited. Traditionally, state responses in the West to terrorist incidents such as 9/11 would have been to place an emphasis on an intelligence-led operation through civilian agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or the Police to take the lead in subsequent investigations with a recourse to specific packages of military units such as Special Forces where necessary. It is interesting to note that it was an intelligence-led operation that caught Osama Bin Laden, not in Afghanistan, but in Pakistan, and it was US Special Forces that killed him. After 9/11, the US administration adopted a reverse focus with the explicit militarization of the response and gave

the US military establishment a task for which it was ideationally and materially ill equipped to conduct, especially in Afghanistan in 2001. The Afghan conundrum posed a number of huge challenges to predominantly American and British military organizations, but the most significant, by far, was the inability of the Bush administration to articulate a clear grand strategy for military elites to coordinate their efforts. Notwithstanding the technological marvels of modern twenty-first-century military machines, the Afghan theater of operations was still governed by age-old variables concerning the prosecution of war. The most obvious of these was the conquest by design or accident of another nation demands a coherent plan of action for what to do the day after the indigenous regime is deposed. Politics as with nature and strategy abhors a vacuum and the Bush administration did not have a carefully considered plan for the future of Afghanistan. In his memoirs, George Bush notes that "the thrill of liberation gave way to the daunting task of helping the Afghan people rebuild – or, more accurately, build from scratch. Afghanistan in 2001 was the world's third-poorest country."[6] If the president had ruminated on his reflections more carefully and considered historical examples of rebuilding war-torn nations such as Germany and Japan after World War II, then the American civil and military effort would have pumped hundreds of thousands of troops into the country to generate complete control, stability, and the apt conditions for a new indigenous political administration under Hamid Karzai to flourish. However, rhetoric and substance were out of kilter and, far from increase the US presence in Afghanistan, it was actually significantly reduced in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq. Without a clear and sustained political aim about the future of Afghanistan and the desired social end state, all previous successes on the battlefield would be rapidly squandered. It did not help that within American political elites, the US Secretary of Defense was not a strong proponent of nation building and is on record as stating that "it would take many years to rebuild societies shattered by war and tyranny. Though we would do what we could to assist, we ultimately couldn't do it for them. My view was that the Iraqis and Afghans would have to govern themselves in ways that worked for them."[7] In sum, the failure to generate a sensible grand strategy by US political elites in the aftermath of 9/11 set the conditions for long-term strategic failure in Afghanistan.

From a more practical perspective, without clarity of higher political direction with regard these crucial decisions, expecting conventional military forces and mindsets to adjust very quickly to deal with transnational terrorists in Afghanistan in a matter of weeks was simply too great a task for them to deal with in an effective manner. Central Command (CENTCOM), the lead military formation, was not geared ideationally or materially to formulate an unscripted operation that would eventually involve regime change in one of the most arduous countries

to prosecute a war in such a short space of time. The military leadership of CENTCOM did not have the unconventional imagination that was unsurprising for a command dominated by conventional soldiers or the capacity to generate innovative operation plans or strategies that was compounded by the time constraints. Some sources indicate that "Franks and his staff worked up a war plan that involved two Army divisions invading Afghanistan through Pakistan. He regarded the combination of special-ops forces and air power as a prelude – a useful way of distracting the Taliban."[8] If this interpretation is correct, then CENTCOM and its leadership were probably as surprised as the rest of the world to see the Taliban regime collapse in December 2001. Compounding a chronic shortage of inspiration and accurate strategic prediction at the top levels of military leadership, civilian elite intervention in the form of Donald Rumsfeld, an exceptionally micromanaging Secretary of Defense, acted as a major dampening factor on the emergence of innovation within the organizational climate dominating CENTCOM. The axis between two strong dominant, command-centric personalities of Franks and Rumsfeld together did not lend itself toward enlightened and emancipated operational planning to respond to Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Worst, it created at times an atmosphere for strategic paralysis. Unsurprisingly, the strategy vacuum in Washington and Tampa provoked a confused initial start to military operations in Afghanistan that lacked an overarching aim, did not suit the unique operational and political circumstances on the ground, and generated very little tangible effect in the first few weeks of activities. Much of the blame lies with civilian political elites in Washington that did not have a clear idea as to what they were trying to achieve in Afghanistan, apart from trying to bomb Al Qaeda, which was not a joined-up response to an act of terrorism in the United States. Giving the conventional US military establishment a task for which the bulk of its forces were not designed or geared toward tackling in an effective way compounded this error.

The extraordinary speed of the Afghan campaign has led to a great deal of speculation as to whether it represented a "model" operation, something to be replicated in the future[9] and somehow evidence of a remarkable state of military affairs that occurred during the overall planning cycle after 9/11. In contrast, to notable studies that make this case, this book argues that a process-based analysis as opposed to an outcome-based one paints a very different picture of the Afghan campaign. First and foremost, it is interesting that none of the cultural preferences of the armed forces of the United States were empowered to any significant degree during operations in Afghanistan. Second, dysfunctional elite decision making in Washington combined to stymie a coordinated response to the Afghan situation. Departments of Defense (DoD) and State were often out of sync and powerful elites within the DoD had separate agendas concerning

responses to 9/11 that included a focus on Iraq, which had nothing to do with the attacks on the United States in 2001. In addition, there was a strong misreading of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan in the 1980s and one of the misunderstood lessons was not to commit sizable land forces to the country. Third, the policy and strategic vacuum created in the DoD and the Pentagon by political and military elites allowed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to fill the gap. Of all the agencies in the United States, the CIA was most prepared to meet the challenge from Al Qaeda (AQ). It has now been revealed by a senior CIA officer that the agency had warned the White House and Condoleezza Rice in July and August 2001 about the "imminent AQ threat."[10] The President Daily Brief (PDB) article of August 8, 2001 was entitled "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S." and mentioned Washington as a likely target.[11]The CIA proved to have the most coherent aims and organization in the US administration and was the first agency of state to get people on the ground in Afghanistan coordinating efforts with friendly indigenous forces, namely the Northern Alliance. It also had the clearest vision of what to do, and as the head of the CounterTerrorism Center (CTC), Cofer Black reveals in the first cabinet meetings after 9/11, "nobody else had even thought about Afghanistan. Nobody else at the table had any [. . .] idea."[12] One of the remarkable features of the activities of the CIA was that the traditional relationship with US Special Forces was not allowed initially to develop as it had in the past, despite the fact that several major conflicts in recent years had successfully exploited this linkage since it developed after World War II. Finally, in the first few weeks of operations, CENTCOM and its military leadership displayed a profound lack of understanding or situational awareness about the effects of their initial bombing campaign with the reality on the ground, despite information being provided by the CIA. A senior officer in the CIA notes of a key presidential meeting about the strategy when it appeared to be failing in October, "there was heated debate about our reliance on our Afghan allies and the validity of our strategy. [. . .] Rumsfeld had passed around a DOD intelligence assessment severely discounting the chances of taking Kabul or Mazar-e Sharif by winter."[13] In fact, numerous operations, from the continued emphasis on the air campaign to hit strategic targets to a very poor employment of Tier 1 Special Forces (valuable and irreplaceable military assets in the short term) such as raiding Mullah Omar's compound that had the potential to turn into another Mogadishu incident, were not producing quick actionable results. These operations indicated a military leadership and operational command that was badly attuned to the scope and subtleties of fighting an unorthodox campaign in Afghanistan, and the first few weeks of military activities produced very little tangible effect on the ground. To some observers, with the influx of volunteers from Pakistan and the inability to target military assets of value to the Taliban, these

efforts were wholly misguided.[14] The rapid disintegration of the Taliban regime can be described as *deus ex machina* because it came about by the coming together of various elements—CIA teams, Special Forces, Afghan allies, and air power—that synergistically and unexpectedly altered the facts on the ground within the strategic landscape and provoked one of the most remarkable military victories in the modern era.

An analysis of US/UK "strategy" in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2008 provides a clear insight into the reasons why Western forces still find themselves locked into an increasingly difficult and complex COIN campaign against the neo-Taliban. The lack of direction and grand strategy can be traced in part to the American way of planning for war, which copied aspects of the German/Prussian approach to planning operations. However, trying to transplant the successful parts of another country's military culture is inherently problematic as armies, navies, and air forces reflect societies from which they are derived. Consequently, the elements that the United States copied lent themselves toward the formulation of intricate planning for war, especially a menu for force options, but not the creation of coherent grand strategy, nor an officer corps that was inculcated with a flair for *Auftragstaktik*. The failure to capture Osama Bin Laden around the mountains of Tora Bora in 2001 provides further evidence that CENTCOM was simply incapable of responding effectively to changing event on the ground or indeed to generate adaptive and innovative strategies to deal with the new post-Taliban environment in order to neutralize decisively the threat from Al Qaeda that was the primary war aim of the Afghan mission. A significant factor in allowing the Taliban to reconstitute and the insurgency to develop in Afghanistan was the Iraq distraction, which drew attention, key personnel, and material away from Operation Enduring Freedom at critical moments in the campaign from late November 2001 onwards. This decision proved to be quite a surprise even for senior officers in the CIA who were unaware at the time that it had been taken.[15] The British approach to operations in Afghanistan was very much in the role of a junior and supportive partner to the United States, which did not provide much scope for independent action. One of the great successes of British policy in the initial phases of the campaign, notwithstanding the valuable contribution of Special Forces, was the creation of the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul. A key failing, however, in British policy toward Afghanistan stemmed from Tony Blair's "sofa-style" of government, an ad hoc management mechanism that did not lend itself toward careful decision making in relation to the formulation of joined-up strategy. The disastrous decision to deploy British troops to Helmand province in 2006 was indicative of this ill-informed approach to foundational operational decisions that can be wholly attributed to a failure on behalf of British political elites to recognize the sheer scale of the task that they were allocating to British

forces. Nevertheless, the sharp deviation from the original plan of action in Helmand province by military elites led directly to the abandonment of the peacekeeping role in favor of a war fighting one can be attributed to endogenous factors within British military elites that compounded a poor political decision to deploy them in the first place. Altogether, the absence of a grand strategy in Afghanistan has stymied American, British, and NATO's efforts to win the COIN campaign against the resurgent neo-Taliban.

The election of President Barack Obama in late 2008 brought about an opportunity for a fresh perspective on the war in Afghanistan and a very noticeable change of direction occurred. By the time Obama took office, there were 38,000 US troops in Afghanistan[16] with a request for a further 30,000 by the top US commander in theater General David McKiernan that had been placed in the final days of the Bush administration (which the new president inherited) that swelled rapidly to 68,000.[17] What happened in 2009 was a remarkable set of events that steered the Obama administration into a radical new shift in Afghanistan. The first stage was the removal of the highly competent General McKiernan, the officer who essentially made the invasion of Iraq successful. The sacking of General McKiernan in May 2009 was breathtaking. Michael Hastings notes the media commentary at the time that it was the "first sacking of a wartime theater commander" since General MacArthur during the Korean War,[18] and unlike the former commander, General McKiernan in his own view had not "done anything wrong."[19] McKiernan was replaced by one of the rising stars of the surge in Iraq, General Stanley McChrystal, a soldier with a career in special operations, who had been in command of the top secret Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) in Iraq. What many do not know is that while Petraeus was conducting the overt COIN effort in Baghdad, alongside of him was McChrystal engaged in what some have described as "industrial counterterrorism"[20] attacking suicide terrorists on a daily/nightly basis and killing/capturing "thousands"[21] of people. It could be unkindly, but accurately, described as trying to kill off an insurgency by literally doing that. It remains open to question whether it is possible to kill your way out of a deeply rooted insurgency. On appointment, McChrystal, along with other elements in the Pentagon, lobbied hard and received, after much deliberation by President Obama, who felt "boxed in" by this request, a further 30,000 troops. The parallels with the "surge" in Iraq were stark, but again raised the pressing point of whether the model in Iraq could be transplanted with equal effect in Afghanistan, a very different theater of operations. However, President Obama sensibly placed a timetable for withdrawal for these surge forces of just 18 months[22] so that it would not be an open-ended commitment that the United States simply could not afford. What was interesting about the new approach is that endogenous pressures from within the Pentagon and

the US Army seemingly bounced President Obama into a new approach in Afghanistan. Some sources point to a conspiracy theory to suggest that the new breed of US Army officers, all graduates from West Point, the so-called politically savvy "COINdinistas"[23] represented by Generals David Petraeus, Stanley McChrystal, and Ray Odierno, were part of a "tight-knit clique of powerful generals who had begun to seize control of the Army."[24] Notwithstanding such suggestions, the new approach in Afghanistan was not "a full-blown counterinsurgency strategy"[25] due to the relatively small size of US forces that would peak around the 100,000 mark and the strict timeline for withdrawal that now stands at 2014 ensured that it would not drift into a forever war. The downfall of General McChrystal in June 2010 captures an extraordinary moment in the Afghan war. As one of the new generation of media friendly, cult status generals in the United States, General McChrystal had allowed a reporter from *Rolling Stone* magazine unique access to his inner circle and the subsequent article entitled "Runaway General" and later book called *The Operators* painted an extraordinary picture of a hedonistic military elite that was contemptuous of their political leaders, diplomats, and foreign allies. It also revealed a general who appeared out of touch with his troops and actual conditions on the ground in Afghanistan. Some US soldiers were deeply unhappy with regard the COIN directives being issued by McChrystal and expressed their dissatisfaction to him during an official visit, an unusually frank discussion between a commanding general and his soldiers that strained the boundaries of military etiquette.[26] The detachment between military and political elites with the situation in Afghanistan facing the troops is perhaps captured by the increasingly common phenomenon of coalition troops being killed by their indigenous allies or the Afghan Army. It is estimated that "16 percent of American casualties are caused by the Afghan security forces killing soldiers in the American Army."[27] Further evidence of the tensions on the ground became apparent in March 2012 when a lone US soldier went berserk and calmly entered a number of houses in Kandahar and shot dead 16 civilians and wounded 5 others.[28] Whatever spin generals and politicians in both the United States and United Kingdom like to put on the Afghan campaign, a very different narrative is apparent in the field with the troops. In the case of the gross conduct of his senior general, President Obama had no choice but to accept his resignation, in effect sacking him, in June 2010 and the McChrystal saga captured all that was wrong with the renewed US effort in Afghanistan: the glaring absence of a coherent "workable" strategy; generals and their careers in enclosed reality bubbles often detatched from the immediate situation on the ground and to cap it all supporting a widely considered corrupt indigenous political administration under President Hamid Karzai whose legitimacy was questioned deeply in the aftermath of the significant voter fraud during the Afghan election of 2009.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

The decision to invade Iraq remains one of the most bizarre applications of military force in the modern era because of the sheer paucity of commonsense strategic thinking underpinning its logic. For American and, to a lesser extent, British political elites, the redirection of military forces and effort away from the Afghan theater in the middle of the campaign represented a new height of irresponsible government. It also drew attention and focus away from the architects of the 9/11 attacks, Osama Bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network. Furthermore, there was no linkage between credible political aims rooted in a careful appreciation of Iraq, its history, and likely outcome in the aftermath of the invasion to the military effort. It is neatly put by Hew Strachan that "there was no strategy that united the military and the civilian, the operational to the political, with the result that the operational level of war also became the de facto strategy, and its focus meant that a wider awareness of where the war was going was excluded."[29] The Iraq puzzle posed a number of significant challenges to military commanders, especially in terms of the extraordinary levels of civilian political elite intervention in the planning process. The origins of the war can be traced back to a specific ideology and key personalities within the American political establishment and an extreme wing of the field of defense/strategic studies that had long held an ambition to topple Saddam's regime. When Wolfowitz made his pitch to senior planners in the United States in the days after 9/11 to go after Iraq, a CIA official in the room noted, "there was a heavy silence around the table. I looked around the room. Still nobody said anything. *What is he smoking?* I wondered. There was nothing in our intelligence collection or analysis that implicated Iraq in 9/11."[30] Equally, the role of President George W. Bush and his personal motivations for invading Iraq demand serious scrutiny. The choice of a war option against Iraq and the unusual planning process in the United States and the United Kingdom draw a sharp light on the power of social systems and the increasing interference in military matters by political elites through the accumulation of social power as a result of the capitalist system. The development of the military–industrial complex and the rapid evolution of information technologies by the twenty-first century had provided civilian political elites with an extraordinary consolidation of social power over military elites. As such, the interference of Donald Rumsfeld in the military planning process for Operation Iraqi Freedom mirrored that of one of his predecessors, Robert McNamara, in the Vietnam War, but undoubtedly in the light of technical developments since the 1960s, Rumsfeld's influence was far more invasive. Rumsfeld's interventions in the planning for the invasion of Iraq caused significant systemic and planning failures and, at times, created disruption in the logistical support chain for the operation. The Secretary of Defense justified his adjustments with the all-important

time-phased force and deployment data or TPFDD on the basis that it "was an all-on or an all-off plan, with little flexibility in between. The problem was that we needed more than an on or off switch. We needed a rheostat."[31] To some considerable degree, notwithstanding his years of experience working in military circles, this assessment exhibited a breathtaking lack of awareness of the dangers and difficulties in expecting conservative military establishments to change long-established logistical procedures and processes without the inherent risk of upsetting the entire metaphorical apple cart, prior to a military engagement. Nevertheless, without the compliance of key military commanders, Rumsfeld would not have been able to generate such a deleterious effect.

The operational strategy underpinning Operation Iraqi Freedom was undermined, not only by Rumsfeld's interference but also by the inadequacies of CENTCOM's grasp of it and an obsession by key commanders with speed and firepower as substitutes for effective military planning. The plan of attack on Iraq represented at best a highly risky, poorly constructed, and ill-conceived essay in grand tactics that in the face of semi-competent enemy would have generated catastrophic setbacks for the US mission. However, endogenous elements within US military culture provided the conditions for piecemeal success in Iraq with the appointment of General David McKiernan, whose planning skills, requests for forces, and operational acumen offset to a degree the more negative dimensions of the Rumsfeld/Franks axis. Another troubling feature of the US planning process was the willingness of political elites to allow key military commanders such as General Tommy Franks to retire in the immediate aftermath of the invasion. Of this decision, Condoleezza Rice notes that "I cannot be sure that the turnover in leadership mattered in the final analysis, but I remember thinking at the time that it was bizarre to change command in the middle of a war."[32] The sensible decision would have been for General McKiernan to take over, but some sources indicate that Rumsfeld did not like him. According to Michael Hastings, "so after Baghdad falls, McKiernan is supposed to take over. Doesn't happen."[33] The lack of ownership and accountability for strategy by military elites is a major shortcoming of the campaign because it does not incentivize them to produce long-term workable plans, merely short-term fixes for the duration of their responsibility. It is the same for British officers and stems in large part from how the military organizations in the United States and United Kingdom operate with two-/three-year appointment cycles that in conflicts become four, six, or twelve months rotations that undermines consistency and a coherent approach to strategy. From a historical perspective, it would be akin to asking the Duke of Wellington to step aside after a short tenure fighting Napoleon's forces in Spain or doing the same to General Lee at the height of the American Civil War. In some respects, the modern system of military appointments is inimical to the sensible application of force or

responsible military leadership. The chaos in Iraq stemmed in large part in the shortcomings of the command system that allowed the architect of the campaign to step down almost immediately after the invasion with no consequences, political and military, with the exception of reputation, for the inadequacies of the initial planning. This situation, however, is not unique to military circles. None of the key politicians on either side of the Atlantic Ocean have been held accountable for their actions or inactions in the planning and execution of the "strategy" or lack of it in Iraq. For the British forces around Basra, civilian political elite interference and prevarication over the ordering of key military supplies made planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom extremely difficult and not all the equipment managed to reach frontline troops before the start of hostilities.

Operation Iraqi Freedom was a highly unusual war in the modern era because in the face of widespread national and international public opinion, predominantly American and British forces invaded a sovereign country without an international or legal mandate, though some British military chiefs went to great length to get legal advice.[34] Invading Iraq was a huge operational challenge, from the sheer size of the country and its relatively porous borders to the 25 million or so citizens who would have to be persuaded in some way to accept the occupation of the country by foreign forces. A remarkable feature of the campaign was evident in the amount of civilian political elite interference in military matters to the point of actually starting the campaign with a pre-emptive air strike before the invasion was ready to start and without consulting British allies. In addition, another unsurprising element of the campaign was how quickly the original plan of attack stalled in the face of very light opposition from the Iraqi forces, which is indicative of the faith-based approach to operations that dominated civilian political elites in Washington, but also in London that was completely out of touch with military reality. The separation between senior military planners in CENTCOM and operational commanders in the field became painfully obvious as the campaign unfolded. Increasingly, a sense of detachment and irrelevance of CENTCOM senior officers was one of the most noticeable aspects of the campaign as generals on the ground determined sensible courses of action in the face of enemy activities that they had not anticipated with the change of the strategy to attack Baghdad being one notable example.[35] The neutralization of the Apache helicopter regiment by Iraqi forces was one of the more shocking examples of how out-of-touch American military planners were with the state of Iraqi preparations for conflict. With a little more coordination and planning, Iraqi forces could have seriously hampered US momentum on the battlefield. The British contribution to the Iraq campaign, albeit much smaller than their American colleagues, was actually of vital importance in view of the shortcomings of the overall plan of attack and the failure to bring the 4th Infantry Division into the field of operations. British armor

represented one-third of all such assets available to the coalition and in the event of an emergency around Baghdad they would have been vital. The British approach to operations around Basra was markedly different to the US style and was characterized by a subtle and measured use of force that proved to be spectacularly successful.

The toppling of Saddam and his regime brought into sharp focus the fundamental shortcomings of the thinking underpinning the Iraq campaign, and coalition strategy would be stymied by these errors of judgment for many years after the initial invasion. The most glaring failure that became rapidly apparent in the days after the capital was seized was the paucity of planning devoted to the stabilization operations after major combat activities were over. US political and military elites allowed a power vacuum to develop in Iraq that was characterized by social chaos, anarchy, and looting that nobody tried to stop effectively. The flaws in the faith-based strategy approach that somehow everything would be functioning normally in Iraq the day after Saddam left power were starkly exposed, notwithstanding plenty of warning from civilian experts in the United States and the United Kingdom. In addition, the state of affairs was exacerbated by Rumsfeld's desire for a speedy drawdown of US troops immediately after the military victory and also by an unusual absence of military leadership by CENTCOM in those critical days between conquest and control of the country. What is clear is that a dominant social perception emerged among political elites in Washington and London that was dramatically out of sync with reality on the ground in Iraq. US strategy in Iraq can be broadly defined between 2003 and 2007 as undergoing five clear phases in relation to the mushrooming insurgency across the country. The first phase is best described as denial in which political elites blatantly refused to acknowledge the emergence of an insurgency. This bore huge consequences for US/UK military forces in the country because they were not equipped ideationally or materially to create a COIN strategy. The second phase was characterized by anger as US political elites ordered military forces to conduct questionable military operations in Fallujah in 2004 and also manifested in the treatment of suspected insurgents in prisons such as Abu Ghraib. The third and fourth phases collapse into each other and encompass bargaining and depression. By late 2005, US forces were trying to work with indigenous elements to stabilize the situation, whereas military elites in Baghdad and at CENTCOM had become quite depressed by the situation. The fifth and final phase, marked by widespread personnel changes from the Secretary of Defense to key commanders in Iraq, is best described as an acceptance of the true state of affairs in Iraq. This is characterized by the implementation of the "surge" based on the principles of the Counterinsurgency Field Manual (FM 3–24) and also with the succession of the Obama administration that the invasion was a mistake. It is important to note that the surge was never a long-term

strategic solution to the situation. It was purely a temporary short-term fix that exploited fortuitously some independent elements such as the Sunni Awakening and the willingness of the Mahdi Army to sensibly stop fighting before the bulk of the US surge forces arrived. It is put elegantly by one of the leading international scholars on military strategy, Hew Strachan, who argues, "Field Manual 3–24 took the place of a coalition strategy for Iraq in 2007. Doctrine worked out at the operational level was used by the military to exert pressure on civilians and politicians. The 'surge' in Iraq in 2007, as its opponents made clear at the time, was a change in operational method."[36] In essence, it allowed the US military to create a semblance of order in the short term that enabled them to withdraw with a degree of dignity, unlike during the Vietnam War, in late 2011. The British experience in Iraq has been far more painful in terms of their military reputations than the US one. Unlike the US armed forces, which witnessed a veritable transformation in ideas and equipment toward COIN warfare, British military elites and their thinking were very slow to adapt to the challenges of Iraq. Unlike the United States, support for the war in Iraq was and remains deeply unpopular in British society and the British armed forces never managed to adjust to that social reality. Equally, the unrealistic aspirations of British political elites put British military commanders in an impossible situation. As such, British strategy, which initially rested on the laurels of their successful experience in Northern Ireland, never managed to adapt to the rapidly descending environment in southern Iraq. Consequently, British forces were engaged in a continuous process of retreat and negotiation from insurgents, militia, and terrorists before ultimately they were asked to leave by the Maliki government and quit the country quietly in 2009.

Contemporary military strategy in the twenty-first century

The experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq in the first decade of the twenty-first century suggest that the political and military establishments in the United States and the United Kingdom have struggled to generate coherent strategy and to link national aims to efforts in operational theaters. There are numerous common features in both nations during the GWOT that allow for some sustainable generalizations to be raised in order to explain the strategy deficit. First, there is an increasing insulation of political elites who make critical life and death decisions about the use of force in international relations from contemporary military affairs, despite the fact that their social power to influence it has never been stronger. This is a very worrying trend because as Clausewitz reminds us, war is, at its

most elemental level, "a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."[37] There is a pressing need to bring back the politics into war and vice versa. In the United States, President Bush and Vice President Cheney did not heed the call of active duty in the Vietnam War, notwithstanding that both men had opportunities to do so, if the desire had taken them. In Britain, Prime Minister Tony Blair's career path as a civilian lawyer never took him anywhere close to the sounds of battle. It is remarkable that these political leaders who have become synonymous with a penchant for the use of military forces in recent years during their tenure in office had such limited personal experience of them. It begs the question of how can effective military strategy, but particularly grand strategy, be formulated by political leaders with little awareness of the finer nuances of the very phenomenon they are about to unleash or the agencies of state that will engage in it. War remains the most dangerous, risky, and costly in blood and treasure policy option in world affairs and has done so since ancient times. The education gap within political elites on this issue is striking and clearly must be addressed as a matter of national urgency. If the isolation of political elites from warfare is a continuing trend on both sides of the Atlantic, then it places greater emphasis on the military advisory mechanisms within both cabinets to fill the widening knowledge gap so that political elites can make informed decisions about the strengths and limitations of applying the force option. This state of affairs draws attention to the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the United States and the Chief of the Defense Staff in the United Kingdom to have a more active independent role and status in high-level political decisions concerning war. It also spotlights the military appointments system and the need to avoid compromising this office through political manipulation such as promoting compliant "on message" officers.

Second, military elites need to reframe their relationships with political masters so that the means of fighting are in sync and congruent with the objectives of the campaign, notwithstanding political pressures for short-term results. This requires, above all other considerations, a pressing need to look beyond the purely operational level of war because winning battles is not necessarily sufficient in itself to win wars. According to one informed scholar, the Cold War was a source of the disconnect between strategy and war because "the actual conduct of war was little studied, with the result that strategy did not put much weight on war-fighting itself. Secondly, and consequently, soldiers were left without a clear role in the shaping and development of strategy."[38] It is of perhaps no surprise that the numbers of great commanders who emerged from the ranks in the United States and the United Kingdom in the post-war period who successfully translated military strategy in a given theater into a successful political outcome are very thin on the ground. With regard COIN campaigns, only two stand out: General Sir Gerald Templer during the Malayan Emergency and General

David Petraeus in Iraq. Interestingly, the unifying element between them, apart from professional approaches to their respective campaigns, is that exploits of both officers made the cover of TIME magazine during their years in command. The recent experience of war in Afghanistan and Iraq has proved to be a tough proving ground for strategies that were developed in the comfortable confines of think tanks and military establishments. A significant disappointment has been the concept of effects-based operations (EBO) that led to a leading commander in the GWOT, General James Mattis, of the US Marine Corps openly stating "that EBO has been misapplied and overextended to the point that it actually hinders rather than helps joint operations."[39] EBO was an air power enthusiast's military mirage that once again resurrected the false prophesies of Douhet, the father of modern air power theory, albeit in a different form and drawing upon the power of modern computational power to measure military effects on the enemy's will. Equally, the fighting has provoked a fashionable interest, almost an industry, in COIN warfare as a solution to the type of fighting that coalition forces have faced in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite the popular wave of interest in very old ideas about fighting warfare, perhaps best typified by the COIN guru, soldier/scholar David Kilcullen, universally known for his book, *The Accidental Guerrilla*,[40] COIN is in reality musty old wine in new bottles that has not aged well with repackaging. The fundamental problem with COIN is that it is a "means to an end, not an end in themselves."[41] In other words, it is a method of warfare, not a strategy, and has been described as not "a distinct form of warfare, but merely a sub-set of minor tactics."[42] According to Douglas Porch, "COIN offers a doctrine of escapism – an escape from civilian control, even from modernity, into an anachronistic, romanticized, Orientalist vision that projects quintessentially Western values onto non-Western societies."[43] To some degree, COIN is a military Band-Aid that covers the obvious political truth: occupying a foreign country by force with inadequate numbers of troops will inevitably generate resistance/hostility to the invaders. Whether by design or accident, wittingly or unwittingly, the freedom wars have resulted in the occupation of nation-states, and this is the strategy baseline on which to formulate military action or not. David Loyn, based on his extensive experience reporting in Afghanistan, notes that "Afghanistan had long ago built a reputation of resistance to foreign invaders"[44] that was apparent from the campaigns of Alexander the Great onwards. Iraq and its wider geographic context, Arabia, had also a well-deserved reputation for fighting against outside intervention. These indisputable facts of life in both theaters of operation were apparent to all, prior to the initial campaigns, but they were conveniently overlooked or willfully ignored by political and military planners. As such, neither COIN efforts will produce the long-term stability that their architects desire and only the withdrawal of military forces, as demonstrated in Iraq, will produce a reduction, albeit temporary, in view of

the fragile political establishments left behind, in the violence. Iraq already appears to support this claim with over 6,000 civilians losing their lives in the spiraling violence in 2013.[45] More broadly, it is impossible not to notice in recent years the growing levels of instability across the Middle East as a whole, from Libya and Tunisia to Egypt and, most significantly, Syria. To what extent the latter conflict is being fuelled and sustained by the lawlessness in Iraq with whom it shares a border remains open to question. One of the noticeable trends that emerged in 2013 quite dramatically was the unwillingness of people in the United States and the United Kingdom to support their political leaders who urged armed intervention in Syria, even after the confirmed use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by the Assad regime. This perhaps reflects a general war weariness in America and Britain as well as a degree of skepticism of political leaders banging the drums of war that sound especially hollow after all the spin and rhetoric that has been pumped out by political establishments across both sides of the Atlantic Ocean to support flagging efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. The use of force by the United States and the United Kingdom may well remain a highly sensitive issue in the forthcoming decade and perhaps act as a significant influence/constraint on the formulation of military strategy.

The likely demise of the GWOT in 2014 with the withdrawal of US and UK forces from Afghanistan will mark the end of a remarkable decade or so of military effort that has reshaped thinking and armed forces toward warfare. It has exposed deep shortcomings in the production of grand and operational strategy in the West and uncovered critical fault lines between civilian and military elites in vital planning for war. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the material changes in the force structures of armies with a greater emphasis on force protection, body armor, and mine-resistant technologies, its impact has been considerably less in relation to air forces and navies. Afghanistan and Iraq are not the future of warfare. In time, they will be seen in their proper historical context as aberrations: wars of choice fuelled by ideologically driven and radicalized political elites in the United States and United Kingdom with the active compliance of their military establishments. They are classic small wars without the accompanying benefit of plunder and exploitation that imperial nations of the past would have demanded. The enemy forces (insurgents) in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom have been low technology in every respect, armed just with Kalashnikovs, explosive devices and without body armor and, in the case of the Taliban, wearing sandals for shoes, and yet they have managed to wreak significant destruction on high technology, state of the art, and professional armed forces. In this light, the difficulties posed by the experience of the Global War in Terror are magnified because if the most powerful conventional forces in the world have struggled to fight effectively in Afghanistan and Iraq, then it begs the question of how will they perform against more powerful and competent enemies, especially

in terms of a state on state or interstate conflict. More darkly, the fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq has inadvertently produced a new generation of fighters in both countries, both young and old men who are skilled at arms and have a taste for revenge and combat. The question remains when the last coalition forces leave Afghanistan in 2014 will a new breed of international fighter/terrorist/insurgent emerge in international affairs, akin to Osama Bin Laden's rise to infamy in the 1990s? In the final analysis, this research indicates that despite the billions of dollars spent each year on defense in the United States and the United Kingdom, the imagination of political elites and military planners was sharply out of sync with the character of the wars they fought for much of the so-called GWOT. This in itself along with endogenous and exogenous pressures during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom explains a great deal in why these powerful states struggled to tackle Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and the insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq effectively for much of the first decade of the twenty-first century. The end of the fighting in Afghanistan in 2014 will not only be a relief to all concerned, but also a necessary period of intense reflection in political and military establishments on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean about how they plan, fight, and win wars.

Questions

1. What have been the consequences of the Global War on Terror for international relations since 9/11?
2. Assess the significance of the death of Osama Bin Laden in 2011.
3. Evaluate the consequences of Operation Iraqi Freedom for Iraqi society today?
4. Assess the state of the insurgency in Afghanistan today.
5. What lessons can be drawn from the Global War on Terror for the application of military force in world affairs?

Notes

1. George Bush, *Decision Points* (New York: Virgin Books, 2010), 132 (Kindle Edition).
2. Tony Blair, *A Journey* (London: Hutchinson, 2010), 345 (Kindle Edition).
3. See the official Airbus website, accessed June 19, 2012, www.airbus.com/aircraftfamilies/passengeraircraft/a380family.a380–800specifications.
4. A firestorm generated temperatures of 1,000 fahrenheit and produced superheated air traveling around 300 mph. It is deliberately constructed by waves of bombers dropping a mixture of weapons from high explosive to

break up buildings to expose wooden beams and killing fire fighting teams to incendiaries to create fire. It is completely dependent on weather conditions and requires hot and dry conditions. See Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War To Be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 308 (Kindle Edition).

5 General Sir Richard Dannatt, *Leading from the Front* (London: Bantam Press, 2010) (Kindle Edition).

6 Bush, *Decision Points*, 204 (Kindle Edition).

7 Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 483 (Kindle Edition).

8 Fred Kaplan, *Daydream Believers: How a Few Grand Ideas Wrecked American Power* (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2008) (Kindle Edition).

9 Richard B. Andres, Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr, "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model." *International Security,* 30, no. 3 (Winter 2005/2006).

10 Henry A. Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 179.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 239.

14 See Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 11–12.

15 Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, 239.

16 Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2010) (Kindle Edition).

17 Ibid.

18 Michael Hastings, *The Operators: The Wild and Terrifying Inside Story of America's War in Afghanistan* (London: Orion Books, 2012), 37 (Kindle Edition).

19 Ibid., 36.

20 See Mark Urban, *Task Force Black: The Explosive True Story of the SAS and the Secret War in Iraq* (London: Little, Brown, 2010), 91.

21 Hastings, *The Operators*, 172 (Kindle Edition).

22 See President Obama's West Point speech, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan," of December 1, 2009 when he announced the surge.

23 Hastings, *The Operators*, 38 (Kindle Edition).

24 Ibid., 38.

25 Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (Kindle Edition).

26 See Hastings, *The Operators*, 262–265 (Kindle Edition).

27 Ibid., 270.

28 "US Soldier Kills Afghan Civilians in Kandahar." *BBC News*, March 11, 2012.

29 Hew Strachan, "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War." *Survival*, 52, no. 5 (October–November 2010): 166.

30 Crumpton, *The Art of Intelligence*, 188.

31 Donald Rumsfeld, *Known and Unknown: A Memoir* (New York: Sentinel, 2011), 439 (Kindle Edition).

32 Condoleezza Rice, *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2011) (Kindle Edition).

33 Hastings, *The Operators*, 7 (Kindle Edition).
34 General Sir Mike Jackson, *Soldier* (London: Corgi Books, 2008), 402–403.
35 Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 375–377.
36 Strachan, "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War," 168.
37 Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds, *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 87.
38 Strachan, "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War," 159.
39 James Mattis, "USJFCOM Commander's Guidance for Effects-based Operations." *Parameters* XXXVIII (Autumn 2008): 18.
40 See David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (London: Hurst, 2009).
41 Strachan, "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War," 159.
42 Douglas Porch, "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN." *Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies,* 22, no. 2 (May 2011): 240.
43 Ibid., 252.
44 David Loyn, *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement in Afghanistan* (London: Windmill Books, 2009), xxx.
45 "Iraq Violence: Eighteen Killed after Being Abducted." *BBC News*, November 29, 2013.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Thomas. *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare*. London: Frank Cass, 1998.

Allison, Graham and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. New York: Longman, 1999.

Andres, Richard B., Craig Wills, and Thomas E. Griffith Jr. "Winning with Allies: The Strategic Value of the Afghan Model." *International Security* 30, no. 3 (Winter 2005/2006): 124–160.

Arrian. *The Campaigns of Alexander*, with an introduction by J. R. Hamilton. London: Penguin, 1971.

Avant, Deborah. *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006.

—. "Political Institutions and Military Effectiveness: Contemporary United States and United Kingdom." In *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness*. Edited by Risa A. Brooks and Elizabeth A. Stanley. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.

Bacevich, Andrew J. *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009.

Bamford, James. *A Pretext for War: 9/11, Iraq, and the Abuse of America's Intelligence Agencies*. London: Doubleday, 2004.

Barnes, Anne Evans. "Realizing Protection Space for Iraqi Refugees: UNHCR in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon." *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 167, UNHCR (January 2009).

Barnett, Correlli. *The Desert Generals*. London: Orion Books, 2011 (Kindle Edition).

Benbow, Tim. *The Magic Bullet? Understanding the 'Revolution in Military Affairs'*. London: Brassey's, 2004.

Biddle, Stephen D. "Afghanistan and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy." *Strategic Studies Institute* (November 2002).

—. *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

—. "Allies, Airpower and Modern Warfare: The Afghan Model in Afghanistan and Iraq." *International Security* 30, no. 3 (Winter 2005/2006).

Blaber, Pete. *The Mission, the Men and Me: Lessons from a Former Delta Force Commander*. New York: Berkley Caliber, 2008.

Blair, Tony. *A Journey*. London: Hutchinson, 2010 (Kindle Edition).

Booth, Ken. "Bernard Brodie." In *Makers of Nuclear Strategy*. Edited by John Baylis and John Garnett. London: Pinter Publishers, 1991.

Borger, Julian. "The Danger of Market Forces." *The Guardian*, May 6, 2004.
Bradford, Ernle. *Thermopylae: The Battle for the West*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1980.
Briscoe, Charles H., Kenneth Finlayson, Robert W. Jones Jr, Cherilyn A. Walley, A. Dwayne Aaron, Michael R. Mullins, and James A. Schroder (eds). *All Roads Lead to Baghdad: Army Special Operations Forces in Iraq*. Fort Bragg: USASOC History Office, 2006.
Briscoe, Charles, Richard Kiper, James Schroder, and Kalev Sepp (eds). *U.S. Army Special Operations in Afghanistan*. Boulder: Paladin Press, 2006.
Brodie, Bernard (ed.). *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1946.
—. *Strategy in the Missile Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.
Bundy, McGeorge. "The Bishops and the Bomb." *The New York Review of Books*, June 16, 1983.
Bush, George. *Decision Points*. New York: Virgin Books, 2010 (Kindle Edition).
Campbell, Alastair and Richard Scott (eds). *The Blair Years: Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries*. London: Arrow Books, 2008 (Kindle Edition).
"Cash Pledged for Iraqi Refugees." *BBC News*, April 18, 2007.
Cheney, Dick with Liz Cheney. *In My Time: A Personal and Political Memoir*. New York: Threshold Editions, 2011.
Chickering, Roger and Stig Förster. "Are We There Yet? World War II and the Theory of Total War." In *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction, 1937–1945*. Edited by Roger Chickering, Stig Förster, and Bernd Greiner. Cambridge: CUP, 2005 (Kindle Edition).
Citino, Robert. *The German Way of Warfare: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005.
Clarke, Richard A. *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror*. New York: Free Press, 2004.
Clausewitz, Carl Von. *On War*. Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
Cockburn, Andrew. *Rumsfeld: An American Disaster*. London: Verso, 2007.
Cooper, Scott A. "The Politics of Air Strikes." In *Immaculate Warfare: Participants Reflect on the Air Campaigns over Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq*. Edited by Stephen D. Wrage. Westport: Praeger, 2003.
Cordesman, Anthony. "Iraq: Too Uncertain to Call." *CSIS Paper*, November 14, 2003.
Couch, Dick. *Down Range: Navy SEALS in the War on Terrorism*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2005.
Cowper-Coles, Sherard. *Cables from Kabul*. London: HarperPress, 2011 (Kindle Edition).
Creveld, Martin Van. *The Transformation of War*. New York: The Free Press, 1991.
Crumpton, Henry A. *The Art of Intelligence: Lessons from a Life in the CIA's Clandestine Service*. New York: Penguin, 2012.
CSIS Report. *American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century*. Washington: CSIS, 2000.
Daalder, Ivo and J. M. Lindsay. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution I Foreign Policy*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 2003.

Dannatt, Richard. *Leading from the Front*. London: Bantam Press, 2010 (Kindle Edition).
DeGroot, Gerard. *The Bomb: A Life*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2004 (Kindle Edition).
DeLong, Michael with Noah Lukeman. *Inside CentCom: The Unvarnished Truth about the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq*. Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2004.
Depula, David A. *Effects-Based Operations: Change in the Nature of Warfare*. Arlington: Aerospace Education Foundation, 2001.
Dixon, Norman. *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*. London: Pimlico, 1994.
Dodge, Toby. "A Sovereign Iraq?" *Survival* 46, no. 3 (Autumn 2004).
Elias, Norbert. *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).
—. *The Court Society*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2006.
English, Allan D. *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004.
Fairweather, Jack. *A War of Choice: The British in Iraq 2003–9*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2011 (Kindle Edition).
Fergusson, James. *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*. London: Bantam Press, 2008.
Finlan, Alastair. *The Gulf War 1991*. Oxford: Osprey, 2003.
—. "Trapped in the Dead Ground: US Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Iraq." *Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies* 16, no. 1 (2005).
—. *Special Forces, Strategy and the War on Terror: Warfare by Other Means*. London: Routledge, 2008.
—. *Contemporary Military Culture and Strategic Studies: US and UK Armed Forces in the 21st Century*. London: Routledge, 2013.
Finlan, Alastair, Philip Grove, and Mark Grove. *The Second World War: The War at Sea*. Oxford: Osprey, 2002.
Franks, Tommy with Malcolm McConnell. *American Soldier*. New York: Regan Books, 2004.
Freedman, Lawrence. "I Exist; Therefore I Deter." *International Security* 13, no. 1 (Summer 1988).
—. *The Official History of the Falklands Campaign, Vol II: War and Diplomacy*. London: Routledge, 2005 (Kindle Edition).
Gall, Sandy. *War against the Taliban: Why It All Went Wrong in Afghanistan*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012 (Kindle Edition).
Galula, David. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Westport: Praeger, 1964.
Giustozzi, Antonio. *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*. London: Hurst and Company, 2007.
Goffman, Erving. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. London: Penguin, 1961.
Gordon, Michael and Bernard Trainor. *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*. London: Atlantic Books, 2006.
Gormley, Dennis M. "Missile Defence Myopia: Lessons from the Iraq War." *Survival* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2003–2004).

Grau, Lester. *The Bear Went over the Mountain: Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan*. London: Frank Cass, 2003.
Gray, Colin S. *Modern Strategy*. Oxford: OUP, 1999.
—. *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice*. Oxford: OUP, 2010.
Gray, Colin S. and Keith Payne. "Victory Is Possible." *Foreign Policy* 39 (Summer 1980).
Griffith, Samuel B. *Sun Tzu: The Art of War*. Oxford: OUP, 1971.
Hanson, Victor Davis. *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Powers*. New York: Anchor Books, 2002.
Hastings, Michael. *The Operators: The Wild and Terrifying Inside Story of America's War in Afghanistan*. London: Orion Books, 2012.
Hersh, Seymour M. *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib*. London: Allen Lane, 2004.
—. "The Gray Zone: How a Secret Pentagon Program Came to Abu Ghraib." *The New Yorker*, May 24, 2004.
Hoffman, Bruce. "Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism since 9/11." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 25, no. 5 (2002).
Howard, Michael. "A Long War?" *Survival* 48, no. 4 (Winter 2006/2007).
Ibrahim, Hana. "Falluja Women Die by Snipers: Another Picture of Violating Iraqi Women's Rights to Life." *Iraq Occupation Watch*, April 17, 2004.
Jackson, Mike. *Soldier*. London: Corgi Books, 2008.
Janis, Irving L. *GroupThink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982.
Janowitz, Morris. *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*. New York: The Free Press, 1960.
Jomini, Baron Antoine Henri de. *The Art of War*. With an introduction by Charles Messenger. London: Greenhill Books, 1996.
Jordan, David. "Air and Space Warfare." In *Understanding Modern Warfare*. Edited by David Jordan, James D. Kiras, David J. Lonsdale, Ian Speller, Christopher Tuck, and C. Dale Walton, pp. 178–223. Cambridge: CUP, 2008.
Kaldor, Mary. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006.
Kampfner, John. *Blair's Wars*. London: The Free Press, 2004.
Kaplan, Fred. *Daydream Believers: How a Few Grand Ideas Wrecked American Power*. Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2008 (Kindle Edition).
Keegan, John. *The Second World War*. London: Pimlico, 1997 (Kindle Edition).
Kilcullen, David. *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*. London: Hurst, 2009.
Krepinevich, Andrew F. "Cavalry to Computer: The Pattern of Military Revolutions." Reproduced in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*. Edited by Thomas G. Mahnken and Joseph A. Maiolo, pp. 364–376. London: Routledge, 2008.
Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth. *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their Own Families*. London: Routledge, 2009.
Lake, David A. "Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory: Assessing Rationalist Explanations of the Iraq War." *International Security* 35, no. 3 (Winter 2010/2011).
Lambeth, Benjamin. *Air Power against Terror: America's Conduct of Operation Enduring Freedom*. Santa Monica: Rand, 2005.

Lantis, Jeffrey S. and Darryl Howlett. "Strategic Culture." In *Strategy in the Contemporary World*. Edited by John Baylis, James Wirtz, Colin S. Gray, and Eliot Cohen. Oxford: OUP, 2007 (Second Edition).
Lewis, Adrian R. *The American Culture of War: The History of U.S. Military Force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. London: Routledge, 2007.
Lewis, Damien. *Bloody Heroes*. London: Century, 2006.
Loyn, David. *Butcher and Bolt: Two Hundred Years of Foreign Engagement in Afghanistan*. London: Windmill Books, 2009.
Malesevic, Sinisa. *The Sociology of War and Violence*. Cambridge: CUP, 2010.
Marquis, Susan. *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Forces*. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1997.
McInnes, Colin. *Spectator–Sport War: The West and Contemporary Conflict*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002.
McMaster, H. R. *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1998.
Mearsheimer, John and Stephen Walt. *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. London: Allen Lane, 2007.
Metz, Steven. "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq." *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2003–2004).
—. *Iraq and the Evolution of American Strategy*. Washington: Potomac Books, 2008.
Mockaitis, Thomas. "From Counterinsurgency to Peace Enforcement: New Names for Old Games?" *Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies* 10, no. 2 (1999).
Moorcroft, Paul, Gwyn Winfield, and John Chisholm (eds). *Axis of Evil: The War on Terror*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2005.
Moore, Robin. *Taskforce Dagger: The Hunt for Bin Laden*. London: Pan Books, 2004.
Murray, Williamson and Allan R. Millett. *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2001 (Kindle Edition).
Naylor, Sean. *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda*. New York: Berkley Books, 2005.
Neustadt, Richard E. *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan*. New York: The Free Press, 1991.
North, Richard. *Ministry of Defeat: The British War in Iraq 2003–2009*. London: Continuum, 2009.
Page, Lewis. *Lions, Donkeys and Dinosaurs: Waste and Blundering in the Armed Forces*. London: William Heinemann, 2006.
Pirnie, Bruce R. and Edward O'Connell. *Counterinsurgency in Iraq (2003–2006)*, RAND COUNTERINSURGENCT STUDY VOL 2. Santa Monica: Rand, 2008.
Plutarch. *On Sparta*, translated with an introduction by Richard J. A. Talbert. London: Penguin, 2005.
Porch, Douglas. "The Dangerous Myths and Dubious Promise of COIN." *Journal of Small Wars and Insurgencies* 22, no. 2 (May 2011).

Posen, Barry R. *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.
Powell, Colin with Tony Koltz. *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership*. New York: HarperCollins, 2012 (Kindle Edition).
Rasmussen, Mikkel Vedby. *The Risk Society at War: Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: CUP, 2006.
Rayment, Sean. "Army Admits Units Were Starved of Kit during the Iraq War." *The Telegraph*, July 6, 2003.
—. *Into the Killing Zone: The Real Story from the Frontline in Afghanistan*. London: Constable, 2008.
Rice, Condoleezza. *No Higher Honour: A Memoir of My Years in Washington*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2011 (Kindle Edition).
Ricks, Thomas E. *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq*. London: Allen Lane, 2006.
—. *The Gamble: General Petraeus and the Untold Story of the American Surge in Iraq, 2006–2008*. London: Allen Lane, 2009.
Ripley, Tim. *Operation Enduring Freedom: America's Afghan War 2001 to 2002*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword Aviation, 2011.
Robinson, Linda. *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq*. New York: Public Affairs, 2008.
Rosen, Stephen P. *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
Rothstein, Hy S. *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006.
Rumsfeld, Donald. "Transforming the Military." *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (May–June 2002).
—. *Known and Unknown: A Memoir*. New York: Sentinel, 2011, (Kindle Edition).
Schein, Edgar. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
Schelling, Thomas C. *The Strategy of Conflict*. New York: OUP, 1963.
Schroen, Gary. *First In: An Insider's Account of How the CIA Spearheaded the War on Terror in Afghanistan*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2006.
Schwarzkopf, H. Norman. *It Doesn"t Take a Hero*. London: Bantam Books, 1992.
Seldon, Anthony with Peter Snowdon and Daniel Collings. *Blair Unbound*. London: Pocket Books, 2008 (Kindle Edition).
Shaw, Martin. *The New Western Way of Warfare: Risk-Transfer War and Its Crisis in Iraq*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005.
Sloan, Elinor C. *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2012.
Smith, Michael. *Killer Elite: The Inside Story of America's Most Secret Special Operations Team*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2006.
Smith, Rupert. *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*. London: Allen Lane, 2005.
Snyder, Jack. *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
Stanton, Doug. *Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of US Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2009.

Stewart, Andrew. "Southern Iraq 2003–2004: Multi-National Command." In *British Generals in Blair's Wars*. Edited by Jonathan Bailey, Richard Iron, and Hew Strachan. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.
Strachan, Hew. "Strategy or Alibi? Obama, McChrystal and the Operational Level of War." *Survival* 52, no. 5 (October–November 2010).
—. "The Lost Meaning of Strategy." *Survival* 47, no. 3 (2005). Reproduced in *Strategic Studies: A Reader*. Edited by Thomas G. Mahnken and Joseph A. Maiolo, pp. 421–436. London: Routledge, 2008.
Taber, Robert. *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare*. Washington: Potomac Books, 2002.
Tenet, George. *At the Center of the Storm: My Years at the CIA*. London: HarperPress, 2007.
The 9/11 Commission Report. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004.
The Military Balance 2011. London: Routledge, 2011.
The US Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual. FM 3–24/MCWP 3–33.5. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.
Thompson, Robert. *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1966.
Thucydides. *The Peloponnesian War*. Edited by Martin Hammond. Oxford: OUP, 2009.
Tootal, Stuart. *Danger Close*. London: John Murray, 2009.
Tripp, Charles. *A History of Iraq*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Urban, Mark. *Task Force Black: The Explosive True Story of the SAS and the Secret War in Iraq*. London: Little, Brown, 2010.
"US Faces Iraq 'Guerrilla War'." *BBC News,* July 16, 2003.
"US Soldier Kills Afghan Civilians in Kandahar." *BBC News*, March 11, 2012.
Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Dover Publications, 2003.
Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: CUP, 2008.
Witness statement to the Iraq Inquiry by Admiral Lord Boyce (former Chief of the Defense Staff), January 27, 2011.
Witness statement by Rear Admiral David Snelson (former Commander of British Naval Forces, Operation Iraqi Freedom) to the Defence Select Committee, December 3, 2003. See HC 57-III (Session 2003–2004).
Witness Statement by Major General Albert Whitley (former Senior British Land Advisor to the Commander of Coalition Forces Land Component Command in Operation Iraqi Freedom), January 27, 2011.
Wohlstetter, Albert. "The Delicate Balance of Terror." *Foreign Affairs* 37, no. 2 (1959).
Woodward, Bob. *Plan of Attack*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2004.
—. *State of Denial*. London: Simon and Schuster, 2006.
—. *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006–2008*. London: Pocket Books, 2009.
Wright, Donald P. et al. *A Different Kind of War: The United States Army in Operation Enduring Freedom October 2001–September 2005*. Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010 (Kindle Edition).

INDEX

Abizaid, General John 160, 163, 167, 170
Abu Ghraib 166, 193
Adams, Thomas 84
Afghanistan ix, x, 1, 2, 41, 44, 45, 46, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58, 59, 61, 62, 64, 65, 75, 76, 83, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 97, 101, 104, 105, 114, 134, 173, 174, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 194, 196, 197, 198
  Afghan Army 189
  Afghan model 51, 59, 67, 68, 70, 75, 85, 87, 89, 91, 96, 97, 185
  cave complexes 86
  description of 40
  militia forces 87
  opium production 89, 95
  Soviet experience 40, 59, 63, 65, 186
Air Force One 182
Air Force Secretary 170
air power 59, 64, 68, 71, 81, 82, 83, 85, 110, 139, 140, 141, 145, 187
Airbus A380 182
AirLand Battle 18, 19, 37
AK-47 Kalashnikov 118, 197
Al Faw peninsular 143
Al Najaf 143
Al Qaeda 1, 25, 26, 28, 29, 41, 55, 56, 58, 61, 86, 87, 89, 91, 93, 104, 105, 171, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 190, 198
Al Zubayr 144
Alexander the Great 3, 40, 196
Algeria 14, 15
Allison, Graham 163
Ancient Greeks 2, 3
Andres, Richard 87
Anglo-Afghan War (1838–42) 40
anti-tank missiles 16
Apache attack helicopter 109, 136, 137, 192
Arabia 152, 196
Argentina 28
  armed forces 118
Armitage, Richard 103
Assad, Bashar al 197
asymmetric warfare, definition of 29
atomic bomb 11, 103, 108
Auftragstaktik 77, 79, 187
Austerlitz, battle of (1805) 8
Austria 126
Avant, Deborah 79, 165

B-1b bomber 64, 129
B-2A Stealth bomber 30, 44, 64, 129, 140
B-52 bomber 64, 129
Baghdad 117, 121, 126, 130, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136, 139, 144, 149, 150, 157, 162, 169, 170, 171, 173, 188, 191, 192, 193
Baghram Air Base 82
Balkans 154
Bamford, James 103
Basra City 141, 143, 144, 172, 174, 175, 192, 193
Belgrade 44
Biddle, Stephen 87, 91, 128
Binns, Brigadier Graham 143
Blaber, Colonel Pete 81
Black, Cofer 61, 186
Black Hawk Down incident (1993) 60, 84
Blackwater contractors 164, 165
Blair, Tony 58, 92, 94, 133, 142, 172, 182
  sofa-style approach to management 92, 187, 195

Blitzkrieg 8, 59
blue force tracker system 138, 144, 145
Bolton, John 103
Bonaparte, Napoleon 6, 191
Booker, Emma E. (Elementary School) 27
Booth, Ken 12, 13
Borden, William 12
Bosnia 44
Boyd, Colonel John 17
Bradley M2 vehicle 130
Bremer, Paul 162, 163
Brims, General Robin 143, 144
Britain 28, 92, 102, 107, 109, 110, 118, 120, 150, 183
  British forces in Afghanistan 91, 187
  British forces in Iraq (Operation Telic) 141, 142, 192
  military planning for Iraq 106, 120
  phase IV operations 173, 174, 194
British Advisory Mission 15
British Army 173, 174
  2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment 93
  3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment 95
  7th Armored Brigade 143
  16th Air Assault Brigade 144
  generals in the Western Desert campaign 108
Brodie, Bernard 12, 13, 103
Brown, General Doug 84
Bundy, McGeorge 13
Bush, George H. W. 55, 102, 105
Bush, George W. x, 1, 26, 27, 35, 37, 38, 54, 56, 57, 58, 90, 105, 120, 132, 133, 157, 159, 162, 163, 164, 167, 168, 173, 183, 184, 188, 190, 195
  Governor of Texas 55
  Texas Air National Guard during the Vietnam War 55
Bush, Laura 37
Butler, Brigadier Ed 93, 96

C-17 134
Cable News Network (CNN) 69, 138
Cambodia 32
Cambone, Stephen 160, 166
Camp Bastion 95
Camp Doha 138
Camp Rhino 88
Campbell, Alastair 133
Canadian military forces 95
capitalism 107, 108, 190
Card, Andrew 56
Casey, General George 160, 167, 170
Castro, Fidel 15
Casualty aversion/sensitivity 60, 88
center of gravity 112, 114
Central Command (CENTCOM) 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 39, 41, 43, 44, 52, 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 82, 83, 84, 86, 90, 91, 93, 97, 120, 129, 130, 133, 135, 137, 144, 155, 158, 159, 160, 168, 169, 170, 184, 185, 186, 187, 191, 192, 193
  Joint Security Stations (Iraq) 171
  military planning for Afghanistan 42, 44, 65, 80
  military planning for Iraq 89, 90, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 126, 130
  operations and strategy in Afghanistan 82, 85, 87
  operations and strategy in Iraq 138, 140, 142, 144, 145
  organization of 33
  phase IV reconstruction and stability operations in Iraq 149, 151, 155, 156, 158, 161, 163, 193
  the surge 150, 162, 170, 171, 175, 188, 193, 194
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) 51, 60, 61, 62, 63, 71, 82, 85, 90, 116, 132, 133, 134, 135, 169, 186, 187, 190
  AARDWOLF report (Iraq) 163
  Northern Iraq Liaison Element (NILE) 134
  use of money in Afghanistan 63
Cheney, Dick 27, 35, 55, 80, 81, 90, 106, 121, 154, 195
Chickering, Roger 10
Chief of the Defense Staff 195

Chinook helicopter 41, 70, 86
Churchill, Winston 108
Citino, Robert 77
civilian elites 35, 38, 39, 40, 76, 102, 104, 109, 197
Clarke, Richard 54, 104, 105
Clausewitz, Carl von 5, 6, 7, 27, 57, 76, 103, 114, 135, 194
Clinton, President Bill 38, 61, 103
Coalition Land Component Commander (CFLCC) 117
Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) 149, 162, 164
Cockburn, Andrew 103, 111, 119
Cohen, Eliot 17
COINdinistas 189
Cold War 18, 30, 31, 39, 82, 136, 165, 195
Collateral damage, definition of 164
Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) 66
Commentary 103
cooperative engagement capability (CEC) 17
copperhead laser-guided munition 37
Cordesman, Anthony 151, 152
Council of Colonels 169
counter-insurgency (COIN) viii, 11, 15, 95, 96, 162, 164, 166, 169, 170, 171, 174, 175, 181, 187, 188, 189, 193, 194, 195, 196
  definition of 160
Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice (1964) 15
CounterTerrorism Center 61, 186
covert actions 166
Cowper-Coles, Sherard 96
Creveld, Martin Van 18
cruise missiles 13, 16
Crumpton, Hank 63
Cuban Revolution 15
Czege, Brigadier General Wass de 18

Dannatt, General Richard 173
decision cycle dominance 17
Defeating Communist Insurgency (1966) 15
Defense Logistic Organization 120
Defense Policy Advisory Board 103
DeGroot, Gerald 11
DeLong, Lieutenant General Michael 33, 43
Delta Force 30, 62, 68, 81, 88, 93
  Task Force Gecko 68, 69, 70
Democratic Party (US) 168
  victories in Congress and the Senate (2006) 168
Department for International Development (DFID) 95, 96
Department of Defense (DoD) 55, 57, 58, 60, 61, 71, 116, 153, 154, 155, 185, 186
Department of State 58, 60, 61, 153, 154, 158, 159, 167, 169, 185
  'Future of Iraq' study 153
Depula, Lieutenant General David 17
Dereliction of Duty (1998) 106
deus ex machina, 81, 85, 187
  definition of 75
Dixon, Norman 82
Diya 144
Dodge, Toby 161
Douhet, Guilio, 140, 196
Dresden 183
Dugan, General Michael 80
Durkheim, Émile 43
Dushanbe 85
Dutch military forces 95
Dutton, Brigadier Jim 143

effects-based operations (EBO) 9, 17, 19, 196
  definition of 112
Egypt 118, 197
El Alamein, battle of (1942) 10
Elias, Norbert 43, 135
emerging technologies (ET) 19
English, Allan 129
Enigma code 108
existential deterrence 13

F-15 129
F-16 129
F-117 Stealth Fighter 17, 102, 127, 129, 132, 133, 140
Falklands Conflict (1982) 28, 91, 118

Fallon, Admiral William 170
Fallujah 164, 165
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 26, 183
Feith, Douglas 103, 112, 160
Fergusson, James 95
Field Manual 100–5, 18
firestorm 183
first strike capability 13
Follow-On Forces Attack (FOFA) 19
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 92, 96
Förster, Stig 10
Franco-Prussian War (1870–1) 77
Franks, General Tommy 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 54, 58, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 89, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 144, 155, 156, 185, 191
  leadership style 36, 37, 45
Fraser, Brigadier David 96
Freakley, Major General Ben 96
Fry, General Robert 174

Galula, David 15
Garner, General Jay 154, 159
Gates, Robert (Secretary of Defense) 168, 170
Gereshk 95
Germany 116, 126, 184
global positioning system (GPS) 111, 128
Global War on Terror viii, 1, 20, 37, 92, 194, 196, 197, 198
  definition of 181
Goffman, Erving 43
Goldwater Nichols Act (1986) 32, 116
Gordon, Michael 102, 111, 117, 134, 136, 140, 144, 150, 155, 159
grand strategy 8, 35, 39, 40, 78, 195, 197
  in Afghanistan 41, 58, 75, 76, 80, 96, 188
  in Iraq 113, 150, 151
grand tactics 8
Gray, Colin 13
Greek idea of strategy 2
Green Berets 62, 63, 84
  A-Teams 85
Grenada 32
Griffith Jr, Thomas E. 87
group think 35, 82
guerrilla warfare 15, 45
  definition of 88
Guevara, Che 15
Gulf War of 1991 17, 19, 32, 35, 39, 56, 65, 80, 82, 84, 91, 102, 104, 105, 115, 127, 135, 136, 157
  Gulf War model 42, 44, 64, 65, 125

H-Bomb 12
Haiti 154
Hamburg 183
Hanson, Victor Davis 4
Hastings, Michael 188, 191
Helmand province 75, 95, 96, 97, 172, 187
  British operations 94, 95, 188
Hersh, Seymour 35, 69, 70, 119, 166
Hiroshima 10, 11, 12
HMS *Ark Royal* 143
HMS *Ocean* 143
host nation support (HNS) 53
Hussein, Saddam 32, 44, 56, 82, 90, 102, 104, 105, 111, 114, 118, 125, 132, 133, 134, 135, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 159, 161, 162, 164, 166, 172, 175, 190, 193

improvised explosive devices (IED) 29, 171
Indochina 14
information technology (IT) 109
inkspot strategy 95
  definition of 91
insurgency 15, 198
  definition of 149
International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) 93, 95, 187
Iran 126, 127, 153
Iran/Iraq War (1980–8) 44, 157
Iraq ix, x, 1, 2, 44, 56, 61, 89, 90, 91, 94, 96, 101, 104, 121, 125, 126,

127, 145, 149, 150, 152, 154, 156, 157, 159, 160, 162, 163, 164, 166, 167, 168, 170, 172, 173, 174, 175, 181, 182, 184, 186, 190, 192, 193, 194, 196, 197, 198
Ba'ath Party 144, 157
costs of the 2003 campaign 101, 167
description of 126
Dora Farms 132, 133
Fedayeen 126, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139
insurgency 156, 159, 161, 162, 163, 164, 166, 171, 173, 174, 175, 193, 194
Iraq War (2003) 102, 106, 107, 111, 114, 115, 116, 149, 154
Iraqi Kurds 102, 126, 134, 159, 175
Iraqi Shia 102, 126, 135, 149, 161, 174
Iraqi Sunni 126, 149, 161, 171, 194
Jaysh al-Mahdi (Mahdi Army) 171, 194
Medina Division 136, 137
military forces 117, 125, 126, 135, 136, 144, 149, 161, 192
Peshmerga 134
Republican Guard 111, 125, 126, 130, 136, 139, 141
Special Republican Guard 126
Israel 56, 103, 109, 153

Jackson, General Sir Mike 58, 94, 116, 120
Jalalabad 86
Janis, Irving 82, 154
mindguards concept 160
Janowitz, Morris 39
Japan 116, 184
Jawbreaker 62, 63, 66
Jena-Auerstadt, Battle of (1806) 8
Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) 34, 38, 67, 71, 115, 116, 119, 155, 159, 169
Chairman's role 34, 116, 120, 168, 195
Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) 188
Joint warfare, definition of 32
Jomini, Baron Antoine de 7, 8, 114
Jordan 126

Kabul 85, 93, 96, 186, 187
Kajaki Dam 95
Kaldor, Mary 18
Kampfner, John 106, 133
Kandahar 88, 94, 95, 189
Kaplan, Fred 25, 38, 89
Karzai, Hamid 89, 184, 189
Keane, General Jack 168
Keegan, John 103, 126
Kelly, Dr David 173
Khan, General Fahim 85
Kilcullen, David 151, 171, 196
King of Prussia 79
Knaggs, Colonel Charlie 96
knowledge structures 43, 44, 45
Korean War (1950–3) 14, 80, 96, 188
Kosovo 44, 92
Kübler-Ross, Elizabeth 161, 166
Kuwait 126, 138, 143
Kuwait City 102, 105

Laden, Osama bin 1, 25, 56, 61, 86, 87, 88, 89, 93, 182, 187, 190, 198
Lamb, General Graeme 175
Lane, Brigadier Roger 94
laser-guided bomb 16, 32, 128
definition of 131
Lashkar Gah 95
Lebanon 104
Lee, General Robert E. 191
levée en masse 6
Lewis, Adrian 82, 84, 106, 109, 116, 130, 131, 141
Libby, Lewis 'Scooter' 90
Libya 197
Liddell Hart, Basil 9, 15
Likud Party 103
Limited war, definition of 14
Lines of communication (LOC) 131, 137, 138
London 192, 193
Loyn, David 196
Luftwaffe 141
Lynch, Private Jessica 138

M16 118
MacArthur, General Douglas 80, 188
MacDill Air Force Base 112
Major, John 92
Malaya (1948–60) viii, 15, 91, 95, 195
Malesevic, Sinisa 31
Maliki, Nouri al 172, 175, 194
Manning, David 133
Marquis, Susan 84
Marshall, Andrew 17, 19
Masirah Island 83
Mattis, General James 165, 196
Mayaguez Incident (1975) 32
Maysan 172
Mazar-i-Sharif 85, 93, 186
McChrystal, General Stanley 188, 189
McColl, Major General John 93
McInnes, Colin 19, 109, 127
McKiernan, General David 117, 134, 137, 138, 139, 141, 143, 144, 158, 188, 191
McMaster, Colonel H.R. 106
McNamara, Robert 39, 80, 106, 190
McVeigh, Timothy 26
Mearsheimer, John 104
Metz, Steven 152, 153, 161
MI5 (The Security Service) 92
MI6 (Secret Intelligence Service) 92
military culture viii, 82, 129, 130, 139, 187, 191
military elites 30, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 45, 67, 71, 76, 79, 80, 81, 82, 93, 95, 96, 97, 102, 108, 110, 114, 115, 117, 120, 125, 135, 142, 153, 155, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 173, 174, 182, 183, 186, 188, 189, 190, 191, 193, 194, 195, 197
military emulation 79
military-industrial complex (Iron Triangle) 109, 110, 190
Millett, Allan 10
Ministry of Defence (UK) 92, 174
Mockaitis, Thomas 15
Mogadishu 70, 150, 186
Moltke, General Helmuth von 78
Moore, Robin 88
Morocco 153
Moseley, General "Buzz" 132, 138
Mujahedin 45, 63
Mulholland, Colonel John 84, 85
Multinational Force in Iraq 170
Murray, Williamson 10
Musa Qala 95, 96
Muthanna 172
Myers, General Richard 38, 116

Nagasaki 12
Nasiriyah 138
National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counterterrorism 104
National Security Act (1947) 116
National Security Council (NSC) 26, 90
naval gunfire support (NGS) 143
neoconservative dogma 135, 152, 154
Netanyahu, Benjamin 103
New York Times 134
New Yorker 70
Newbold, General Gregory 112
No-fly zones 102, 140
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 14, 19, 29, 75, 93, 97, 188
North, Richard 172
Northern Alliance 59, 61, 63, 66, 67, 81, 82, 85, 186
Northern Ireland 174, 194
Now Zad 95
nuclear deterrence, definition of 11
nuclear strategy 11
nuclear triad 13
nuclear warfighting, definition of 12

O'Sullivan, Meghan 154
Obama, Barack 80, 162, 172, 188, 189, 193
Objective Rhino 69
Odierno, General Ray 170, 189
Office for Strategic Services (OSS) 62
Office of Net Assessment 17, 19
Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) 158, 159, 163
Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) 106, 112, 116, 126

Office of the Vice President 57
Ogarkov, Marshal Nicolai 17
Oklahoma City bombing (1995) 26
Oman 70, 83
Omar, Mullah 68, 89
  raid on his compound 68, 69, 70, 186
On War (1832) 5
OODA Loop 17
Operation Anaconda (2002) 91, 94
Operation Desert Fox (1998) 32, 92, 111
Operation Desert Storm (1991) 102, 117, 130, 131
Operation Eagle Claw (1980) 32
Operation Enduring Freedom (2001) 34, 40, 51, 52, 53, 54, 58, 59, 64, 66, 70, 84, 85, 89, 91, 111, 128, 131, 135, 141, 182, 183, 187, 197, 198
Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003) 106, 107, 111, 115, 116, 117, 120, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 135, 136, 137, 140, 143, 144, 149, 150, 154, 161, 182, 190, 191, 192, 197, 198
  Cobra II 118
  Generated Start 115
  The Hybrid 115, 117
  Running Start 115
Operation Jacana (2002) 93
Operation Urgent Fury (1983) 32, 33
operational strategy 8, 197
OPLAN 1003–98 111
Ottoman Empire 153
Owens, Admiral William 17

Pace, General Peter 160, 168, 170
Page, Lewis 109
Pakistan 86, 87, 89, 93, 183, 186
Palestine 14, 104, 153
parallel warfare 17
  definition of 64
Payne, Keith 13
Pearl Harbor 25, 29, 54
Pentagon 121, 158, 159, 160, 162, 163, 168, 169, 170, 186, 188
Perle, Richard 103, 134
personal computer (PC) 109
Petraeus, General David 169, 170, 175, 188, 189, 196
Phalanx 2
Philip II of Macedon 4
Plataea, Battle of (479 BC) 3
Plutarch, 3
political elites 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 39, 45, 55, 57, 59, 65, 71, 76, 79, 80, 90, 92, 94, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 118, 119, 125, 132, 133, 135, 142, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 182, 183, 184, 186, 187, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 197, 198
Porch, Douglas 196
Powell, Colin 27, 54, 57, 76, 104
President Daily Brief 186
Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) 27
prisoner's dilemma 13
private security companies 165, 166
Project for a New American Century (PNAC) 56, 103
Protestantism 107
proxy war 14
psychological operations (PsyOps) 9

Qatar 134, 138, 139, 144, 145

RAND 162
Rayment, Sean 95
regime change 103, 151, 152
Reid, John 94
Renuart, Major General Gene 65
revolution in military affairs (RMA) 16, 17, 18, 127
  definition of 51
Rice, Condoleezza 27, 54, 56, 57, 90, 119, 120, 121, 132, 133, 157, 186, 191
Richards, General Sir David 95
Ricks, Thomas 38, 134, 137, 156, 160, 165
Riper, General Van 119
Ripley, Tim 63

Robinson, Linda 163, 169
rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) 127
Rodgers, Walter 138
Rolling Stone magazine 189
Rommel, Erwin 77
Rosen, Stephen 42, 45
Rothstein, Hy 59, 64, 84
Royal Marines 93, 94, 142, 143
  3 Commando Brigade 144
Royal Navy 118
Rumaylah oilfields 143
Rumsfeld, Donald (Secretary of Defence) x, 19, 20, 26, 27, 28, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61, 66, 67, 69, 71, 90, 93, 103, 104, 106, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 125, 128, 129, 130, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 139, 140, 152, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 163, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 184, 185, 186, 190, 191, 193
  corporate style of management 39
  "snowflakes" 35
Rwanda 18

S-60 136
SA-7 136
SA-14 136
Sadowa/Koniggratz, Battle of (1866) 79
Sadr, Muqtada al 171
Sanchez, General Ricardo 160
Sangin 95, 96
satellite-guided bombs 127, 133, 141
  definition of 128
satellites 141
Saudi Arabia 68, 83, 126
Saunders, Lieutenant Colonel James 93
Sawers, John 163
Schein, Edgar 36
Schelling, Thomas 13
Schroen, Gary 61, 62, 66, 67, 85, 90
Schwarzkopf, General H. Norman 32, 36, 65
Scud missile 104, 127
Sea King MK VII 143
Seal Team 6, 30, 182
SEALs (US Navy Special Forces) 69
Searle, G. D. 39, 119
Second strike capability 13
Secretary of the Army 170
September 11, 2001 (9/11) viii, 1, 18, 25, 27, 41, 45, 60, 61, 90, 182, 183, 186, 190
Shai-i-Khot valley 91
Shaw, Martin 60
Shelton, General Hugh 27
Shinseki, General Eric 116, 117
Shirreff, General Richard 174
"shock and awe" 140, 145
  definition of 125
Sierra Leone 92
Six Day War (1967) 59
Sloan, Elinor 2
Smith, General Sir Rupert 18
Snelson, Rear Admiral David 142
Somalia 70, 137, 154
Soviet Union 16, 18, 19
  Soviet Army 45, 54
Sparta 3
Special Air Service (SAS) 88, 93
Special Boat Service (SBS) 93
Special Forces (SF) 9, 30, 62, 63, 67, 68, 69, 71, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 90, 131, 134, 138, 183, 186, 187
  5th Special Forces Group 84, 129
  10th Special Forces Group 129
Special Operations Forces (SOF) 44, 63, 69, 71, 84, 91, 129
Stalingrad 150
  German 6th Army 150
Strachan, Hew, 2, 190, 194
strategic air power 44, 45
Strategic Alternatives Panel 16
strategic studies viii, 1, 11, 12, 13, 18, 103, 107, 190
strategy viii, ix, x, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 20, 161, 162, 175
strategy, definition of 4
Strock, General Carl 154
Suez Canal 16
Sun Tzu 8, 9
Syria 104, 126, 197
system of systems 17

T-55 tank 126
T-72 tank 126
Taber, Robert 15
tactics, definition of 7
Tajikistan 63, 85
Taliban/Neo-Taliban 40, 41, 44, 52, 58, 59, 63, 65, 66, 67, 70, 75, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 96, 97, 105, 185, 186, 187, 188, 197
Tampa 65, 68, 70, 71, 132, 161, 164, 168, 185
Task Force 20, 134
TASK FORCE DAGGER 84
television-guided bomb 16
Templer, General Sir Gerald 195
Tenet, George 61, 132
terrorism 182, 185
  as an act of war 26
  definition of 25
Thatcher, Margaret 92
The Accidental Guerrilla (2009) 151, 196
The Art of War (1838) 8
The Charge of the Knights 175
The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy (2007) 104
The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual (2006) 169, 193
Thi Qar 172
Thompson, Sir Robert 15
"Thunder Runs" 151
TIME Magazine 196
Time-phased forces deployment data (TPFDD) 191
Time-phased forces deployment list (TPFDL) 118, 119
Tomahawk cruise missile (TLAM) 32, 44, 53, 64, 132, 133, 140
Tootal, Colonel Stuart 95, 96
Tora Bora 86, 87, 88, 93, 187
Trainor, Bernard 102, 111, 117, 134, 136, 140, 144, 150, 155, 159
transformation concept 19, 37, 120, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 160
Tripp, Charles 153
Truman, Harry 80
Tunisia 197
Turkey 121, 126, 131, 139, 141, 143

Ullman, Harlan K. 140
Umm Qasr 141, 143, 144
United Kingdom viii, ix, x, 1, 109, 116, 120, 162, 173, 181, 189, 190, 191, 193, 195, 197
United Nations 102, 142, 154, 157
United States 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 40, 41, 45, 46, 52, 54, 56, 64, 79, 80, 86, 93, 97, 102, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 120, 134, 149, 150, 158, 163, 169, 172, 181, 182, 183, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 193, 194, 195, 197, 198
University of Chicago 103
Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) 129
  Global Hawk 129
  Predator drones 129, 138
US Air Force 17, 18, 42, 53, 84
  4th Air Support Operations Group 141
  Chief of the Air Force 170
US Army 18, 38, 42, 53, 70, 79, 80, 113, 117, 118, 119, 136, 150, 162, 168, 169, 175, 189
  1st Armoured Division 130
  1st Cavalry Division 130, 155
  3rd Infantry Division 117, 129, 138, 141, 150
  4th Infantry Division 131, 139, 141, 192
  7th Cavalry (3–7) 138
  10th Mountain Division 88
  11th Attack Helicopter Regiment 117, 136
  82nd Airborne Division 129, 139
  101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) 129
  173rd Airborne Regiment 129
  507th Patriot Maintenance Company 138
  Army Surgeon General 170
  military culture 129
  Ranger Regiment 69, 70, 88, 129
  Special Operations Command 84
  V Corps 129, 136, 138, 141

US Marines 53, 69, 130, 141, 142, 143, 150, 162, 165, 169, 196
1st Marine Expeditionary Force 129
1st Marine Division 117, 129
3rd Marine Air Wing 117
5th Marine Regimental Combat Team 117
7th Marine Regimental Combat Team 117
US Navy 17, 42, 53
US Special Operations (SpecOps) 62

Victory syndrome 90, 101, 135
Video teleconferencing (VTC) 65, 66, 70, 83, 145
definition of 127
Vietnam War (1955–75) viii, ix, 14, 15, 16, 18, 39, 42, 60, 80, 84, 106, 107, 110, 116, 136, 162, 168, 190, 194, 195

Wade, James P. 140
Wald, Lieutenant General Charles 66
Wallace, General Scott 134, 150
Walt, Stephen 104
war, definition of 1
war of choice 2, 14
definition of 101
war of survival 2, 14
definition of 101
War of the Flea (1965) 15
war on terror 28, 30, 31, 57
Warden III, Colonel John 17
Warrick, Tom 154
Wars of Unification (1864–6) 77
Warsaw Pact 14, 19, 82
Washington 66, 70, 71, 86, 90, 101, 116, 132, 133, 139, 145, 150, 155, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 165, 168, 169, 170, 185, 186, 192, 193
Washington, George 36
Washington Post 134
Waterloo, Battle of (1815) 6
way of war 77
American way 77, 82, 96, 187
concept of 79
definition of 77
Prussian/German way 77, 78, 79, 80, 187
weapons of mass destruction (WMD) 102, 104, 173, 197
Weber, Max 41, 107, 108
Weekly Standard 103
Wellington, Duke of 36, 191
Wendt, Alexander 42
West Point 8, 37, 189
Westland 109
White House 115, 186
White Mountains 86, 88
Whitehall 95
William I, Frederick 77
Wills, Craig 87
Wohlstetter, Albert 13, 16, 103
Wolfowitz, Paul 55, 56, 102, 103, 104, 112, 160, 190
Wolsley, Lieutenant Colonel Henry 95
Woodward, Bob 104, 160, 167
World Trade Center 18, 25
World War I (1914–18) 108
World War II (1939–45) 10, 11, 14, 34, 59, 77, 103, 108, 127, 128, 139, 140, 141, 183, 184, 186
Wurmser, David 103

Yom Kippur War (1973) 16, 118
Yugoslavia 18

Zinni, General Anthony 111, 115
ZPU-23–2 136